



Connecting the Dots: Simple Past Tense Proficiency and Narrative Fluency in Middle School Writing

Divna Diviana Risca Monica¹, Fika Megawati², Yuli Astutik³, Abdybekova Nurmira⁴

*Corresponding author email: fikamegawati@umsida.ac.id

^{1,2,3}English Language Teaching Program, University of Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, Indonesia

⁴Kyrgyz State Academy of Physical Culture and Sports, Kirgistan

Abstract. This study investigates the correlation between students' mastery of basic past tenses and their ability to compose recount prose in eighth-grade students. Using convenience sampling, 29 students from SMP Muhammadiyah 10 Sidoarjo participated, undertaking a simple past tense mastery test and a recount text writing assessment. Analysis via Pearson Product Moment correlation revealed a significant positive relationship ($r=0.848$, $p<0.05$) between past tense mastery and recount text composition, with the former strongly aiding the latter. The findings underscore the integral role of past tense understanding in narrative construction, offering insights into language pedagogy and curriculum design.

Keywords: simple past tense, ability in writing recount text, correlation

1 Introduction

Language has emerged as the most important component of education on various levels. Speaking, listening, writing, and reading are the four skills required to master a language. If people wish to interact effectively with others, they have to acquire this talent. Understanding language components such as grammar and vocabulary influences mastery of these skills. Grammar itself is crucial in students' language acquisition, especially when studying English as a foreign language. Students cannot deny that grammar and sentence structure enable them to generate proper grammar in speaking and writing activities in everyday life [1].

Grammar is a crucial component of language education and learning, but it is also quite difficult to master [2]. However, learners have to learn grammar because it allows them to comprehend how language rules are employed to express meaning. As a result, they have a greater understanding of how language works, which they will use in their everyday interactions. Grammar is also crucial in teaching and learning since it enhances language abilities, particularly writing skills [3]. Word order necessitates the use of grammar skills. Grammatical principles define the optimal approach to order words and groups of words in a given language to form sentences. Nation stated that writing is a useful activity for students to perform in their daily lives [4]. with each other about their thoughts, ideas, experiences, and others. The student needs to understand how English works as a writer and how it is written [5].

By writing, anyone can exchange messages regarding a piece of information. This is why writing is referred to as a way of communication. At the same time, it might be important because it is widely utilized in education and the workplace [6]. If incorporated into good writing, writing is a productive skill devoid of faults such as vocabulary, spelling, and grammar [7]. Errors may arise when students ignore all of these provisions. Writing consists of two processes, searching for meaning and pouring meaning into language [8]. Students will struggle

to communicate and express themselves in a foreign language if they cannot write [9]. They have to acquire several supporting skills that can aid in developing kids writing abilities. This means that writing is one of the most difficult English abilities to master [10]. We have to consider various factors related to writing, such as how sentences and paragraphs should be structured. Writing is also taught at the junior school to university level. According to the 2013 curriculum, junior high school students, especially class VIII, must learn several texts. One of them is the Recount text.

In junior high school, the recount text is quite important. This text is any written work that describes a historical event and seeks to reconstruct it through the reporting of events [11]. This is one of the important texts that students must grasp to convert their experiences into written paragraphs [12]. Recount text is the simplest type of text [13]. This text's societal function is to recount past occurrences in chronological order. Experiences, personal messages, and unforgettable incident reports are all examples of recount text. In another story no matter how short or simple the text, it needs orientation to open the report. The orientation, events, and reorientation of generic text structures are present in recount texts [11]. Meanwhile, students have to comprehend the generic structure of recount writings and the language features employed in recount texts. The simple past is one of the language elements used in the recount text.

Language used to describe past events, activities, or actions is known as the simple past tense [14]. Things that happened in the past may have happened once, several times, or become a routine. When studying a language, students must master these tenses since they are critical for grammar, particularly for writing recount text abilities [15]. If the recount text is about an event that occurred in the past, students must write it in the simple past tense [16]. This tense has a strong connection in everyday use, especially when telling stories from the past. One of the basics in creating attractive paragraphs in recount writing is to use simple past tense. Students may find it challenging to communicate their views if they only know the basics of grammar. In the past action, a simple past can be used, such as actions that occurred rapidly, over a prolonged period, or that were previously established routines [17]. It means that when expressing an action or activity that took place in the past, the simple past tense can be used. That is, the simple past tense can be used to represent an action or activity that occurred in the past. The simple past tense can be used in two ways: with regular verbs and with irregular verbs. Regular verbs are easier to utilize than irregular verbs.

However, many students make tense errors because they have no idea of the distinction between regular and irregular verbs [18]. Furthermore, there are at least two reasons why students struggle to write recall texts. Students have an idea of what they want to write, but they lack the words to put it into meaningful sentences, and they also lack simple past tense. Thus, students' understanding of the simple past and their ability to write recount text are linked [19]. According to Mukhaiyar, students who are proficient with the simple past will be better while composing recount texts than students who are not proficient with the simple past. It was discovered that students' ability to compose Recount paragraphs increased as their skill in the simple past tense grew.

This research comprises the following studies: Yendriani [12], The results showed that the pupil's comprehension of the simple past tense was deemed to be good. Or, to put it another way, there was a substantial correlation between the student's ability to construct recount paragraphs and their knowledge of the simple past tense. The study also found that students' command of the simple past tense had an impact on their capacity to compose recount paragraphs at the MAN 2 Model Pekanbaru eleventh-grade level. Then, additional factors affected the remaining 30.78%. Second research by Lestari [20], This study discovered a link

between students' knowledge of the simple past tense and their ability to write recount texts. And the third research by Romansyah [21], According to the findings of that study, there is a correlation between students' mastery of the past tense and their writing skills for recounting texts as well as their motivation. A significant 51.7% correlation with recall text writing abilities, with other factors accounting for the remaining 48.3%. It is clear from the summary above that students' proficiency with the simple past tense is connected with their ability to write recount texts.

According to the purpose of the study, the researcher wants to know if students' proficiency with the simple past tense and their ability to create recount text are related. The researcher conducted a pre-observation on 02 November 2022 at SMP Muhammadiyah 10 Sidoarjo. Some students at that school still had difficulty using simple past tense when writing, especially when composing recount texts. The result of the research above can show that the mastery of simple past tense is important to be mastered. And from the previous test, it can be concluded that the mastery of simple past tense and writing ability is correlated. From the previous research above, the distinguishes between this research and previous research is the participant. The second semester of VIII-A class at SMP Muhammadiyah 10 Sidoarjo, which is made up of 29 male students, is the subject of this study. Consequently, the following research question can be put up for this study: Does the mastery of past tense correlate with students' ability to create recount texts?

2 Research Methods

This study used a quantitative investigation, especially the correlational approach. Correlational design is a procedure in quantitative research in which the researcher measures the relationship between two or more variables using statistical methods and correlational analysis [22]. This relationship's degree shows whether the two variables are related or can predict the other. The first independent variable in this study is how well students understand the past tense; which is represented by the letter "X," and the second variable is how well students can produce recount texts, represented by the letter "Y". The population of this study was all class VIII at SMP 10 Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo consisting of 8 A and 8 B with a total of 44 students. The researcher employed a convenience sampling strategy to choose the sample. Members of the target population who meet particular practical requirements, such as ease of access, geographic proximity, availability at a specified time, or willingness to participate, are included for study purposes using convenience sampling, a sort of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling. Additionally, it refers to research participants drawn from a readily accessible community [23].

The researcher chose class VIII-A with a total of 29 students consisting of male students as the sample. This study used primary data because the source of this research data was obtained directly in the form of test results. A test is a set of questions that must be answered, or to which a response is required, to gauge a subject's ability [24]. There are two types of tests in this study. First, a simple past tense mastery test in multiple-choice format. Students choose one correct answer from five choices: a, b, c, d, and e. The researchers provided 30 questions that were adapted from Yendriani. The second test was creating a recount text. The recount text is created by the students based on the assigned topic. The teacher instructed students to write a paragraph about their experience in the past. The teacher used a rubric to assess each student's capacity for writing recount texts. To evaluate how well the pupils had mastered the simple past-tense test,

a percentage analysis was utilized. Using Pearson's product-moment correlation, it was found that student's proficiency with the simple past tense and their capacity for recount text writing are correlated. Pearson Product-moment a significant r implies the existence of a true relationship, and correlation is a technique for examining a link between two variables that is more significant than would be predicted by chance [25]. To calculate the data used the SPSS 26 program. Statistically, the assumptions are as follows:

Ha: $\text{Sig.} < \alpha (0.05)$

Ho: $\text{Sig} \geq \alpha (0.05)$

Ha is acceptable. If there is a link between simple past tense skill and the capacity to create recount text.

If sig. If there is no relationship between simple past tense competency and the ability to create recount text, Ho is acceptable.

3 Findings and Discussion

3.1 Research finding

3.1.1 The result of the simple past tense mastery test

In this study, students' mastery of the past tense was assessed from their past tense test scores. The test results are depicted in the table below.

Table 1. Simple past tense score

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	90-100	11	37,9	37,9	37,9
Valid	80-90	4	13,8	13,8	51,7
	70-80	3	10,3	10,3	62,1
	60-70	11	37,9	37,9	100,0
	Total	29	100,0	100,0	

According to the results of the simple past tense test, 11 students got 37.9% on a scale of 90-100 and 60-70, 4 students scored 13.8% on a scale of 80-90, and 3 students scored 10.3% on a scale of 70-80.

3.1.2 The outcome of authoring Recount Text

Table 2. Recount text score

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	90-100	2	6,9	6,9	6,9

80-90	14	48,3	48,3	55,2
70-80	9	31,0	31,0	86,2
60-70	4	13,8	13,8	100,0
Total	29	100,0	100,0	

In accordance with the table above, 14 students earned 48.3% on a scale of 80-90, 9 students received 31.0% on a scale of 70-80, 4 students earned 13.8% on a scale of 60-70, and 2 students earned 6.9% on a scale of 90-100.

3.1.3 Relationship between Simple Past Tense Mastery and Writing of Recount Text

This research used Pearson product-moment correlational design analysis to determine the correlation coefficient between mastery of simple past tense (variable X) and the ability to write recount text (variable Y). Then the two datasets were analyzed using SPSS version 26. The result of hypothesis testing.

Table 3. Correlation

		Simple Past tense	Recount Text
Simple Past Tense	Pearson Correlation	1	,848**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0
	N	29	29
Recount Text	Pearson Correlation	,848**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	
	N	29	29

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on Table 3.3, it is known that the significance value of the relationship between the simple past tense and the ability to write recount texts is 0.000, which means this value is smaller than 0.05, or ($0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, It is possible to demonstrate a link between past tense and recount text. This signifies that the alternative hypothesis (H_a) has been accepted whereas the null hypothesis (H_o) has been rejected. Person Product Moment Coefficient correlation value was obtained at 0.848. In the degree of relationship guidelines, the Pearson correlation

value is in the powerful correlation category. Therefore, it can be known that the mastery of simple past tense is positively linked to writing ability in Recount text.

3.2 Discussion

This research aims to investigate the relationship between students' mastery of the past tense and their ability in writing Recount text. By explaining the purpose, researchers can provide the necessary context to understand further discussion of the findings. Students' capacity to write in the simple past tense as a recount text and their mastery of tenses were found to be significantly positively correlated in this study with the correlation coefficient (0.848, sig value $0.000 < 0.05$). Students who perform well in the simple past tense will be able to produce quality recount texts. This is supported by Lestari, et.al [20] stated that students with very good knowledge of the simple past will get high marks in writing recount, while students with a weak understanding of the simple past will get low scores [26]. Mastery of grammar has a significant influence and plays an important function in writing skills. In other words, if students want to improve their ability to master simple past tense or other grammar, their writing skills will immediately improve.

These findings are comparable to relevant previous studies. The ability of students to produce recount paragraphs and their competency with the simple past tense was substantially correlated. It can be concluded that students' mastery of the simple past tense has a significant effect on their ability to compose recount texts. Romansyah's research also revealed a relationship between students' mastery of the past tense, self-motivation, and their ability to retell texts in writing. This study shows a very high relationship between the two variables, with a higher correlation coefficient (0.848) than previous studies (0.832) and (0.325). Therefore, this study supports the previous study's findings. This difference indicates the need for further research to understand the factors that might influence these results. Given the existence of a strong association between past tense mastery and the capacity to write recount texts, it is reasonable to conclude that changes in past tense mastery influence the ability to create recount texts. However, it is important to note that factors such as lack of concentration, lack of understanding, and lack of vocabulary knowledge can also contribute to influencing the relationship between the two variables.

4 Conclusions

It is possible to conclude from the findings covered in the preceding chapter. A positive relationship exists between simple past tense mastery and the ability to write recount texts in VIII-A students at SMP Muhammadiyah 10 Sidoarjo. The correlation coefficient between variable (X) and variable (Y) is 0.848 with a sig value of 0.000. It means, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H_o) is rejected. Besides that, there is a significant correlation between the two variables. The r-count is greater than the r-table. It is known that $N = 29$ in the r-table of 5% significance is 0.367, while the r-count is 0.848. Based on the decision of the correlation test, if the r-count is higher than the r-table, the result of the correlation coefficient is significant. By looking at the result of Pearson's Product-Moment correlation, the researcher found that the correlation is in a powerful correlation category. It can

be concluded that the simple past tense has the big power to help students in creating recount text. This is also supported by the content of the simple past tense and the recount text. A recount text is a writing that informs the reader about an event that happened in the past, as opposed to a simple past tense, which is used to describe happened in the past. These reasons allow the researcher to conclude that the recount text and the simple past tense are closely related.

Some suggestions should be given to students and teachers to create future changes. First and foremost, learners have to learn more diligently. Even if some students receive outstanding results on past tense and recount text assessments, they still need to study more about grammar and other texts. The teacher should go over tenses relevant to text kinds, such as simple past and recount text, and how they work in sentences. Teachers additionally have to motivate, stimulate, and provide additional opportunities for students throughout the teaching and learning process so that students' command of grammar and writing improves significantly.

This research was conducted with limitations. For future research, It is hoped that it can continue existing research with a different focus. The researcher hopes that further research can focus on students' problems regarding mastery of tenses, especially in the past tense using different teaching techniques, like using a quiz at the end of each lesson to remind the students of the tenses that have been taught. Future researchers are also advised to add to how students or lecturers solve problems in remembering the term tense. This chapter has concluded with conclusions and suggestions. The researcher hopes that this research can be helpful for readers, especially students majoring in English as a reference for studying the relationship between past tense and recount text.

References

- [1] Y. Apsari, I. A. Saputra, and G. Leriandini, "Students' Perception of Snowball Throwing in Teaching Grammar," vol. 2, no. 2. pp. 52–58, 2019.
- [2] R. Onesty and Fitrawati, "Using Word by Word Games in Teaching Grammar for Junior High School Students," *J. English Lang. Teach*, vol. 01, no. 2, 2013.
- [3] L. Setyowati and D. D. Hardiastikna, "The Correlation between Grammar and Writing Achievement of EFL Sophomore Students at STKIP PGRI Pasuruan, Indonesia," *J. Ilm*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 31–40, 2019.
- [4] I. S. P. Nation, "Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing." 2008. doi: 10.4324/9780203891643.
- [5] A. L. I. Haryadi, "An Analysis of the Student's Error." 2018.
- [6] F. Novia and E. Saptarina, "Process Writing Approach (PWA): The correlation between students writing attitude and writing achievement," 4th Sriwij, " *Univ. Learn. Educ. Int*, vol. 513, pp. 331–336, 2020, doi: 10.2991/assert.k.201230.127.
- [7] T. Betoni and R. Ulfaika, "The Correlation between Students' Grammatical Mastery and Students' Writing Achievement at XI Grade Students of SMAN 1 Tarakan Academic Year 2019/2020," *Borneo J. English Lang. Educ*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 42–55, 2020, [Online]. Available: <http://jurnal.borneo.ac.id/index.php/jele/article/view/1615>
- [8] P. Elbow, *Writing without teachers*. Oxford Univ. Press. Inc, 1998.
- [9] S. Ekawati, "The Mastery of Simple Past Tense and its Correlation with the Achievement in Writing Recount Texts by Eighth Graders of SMPN 2 Mlati." p. 4, 2017.
- [10] S. M. Farooq, M. Uzair-Ul-Hassan, and S. Wahid, "Opinion of second language learners about writing difficulties in English language," *South Asian Stud. A Res. J. South Asian Stud*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 183–194, 2020.
- [11] A. M. Husna and Atikasari, "LET: Linguistics, Literature, and English Teaching Journal Students' Difficulties in Writing Recount Text at Inclusion Classes," vol. 9, no. 1. pp. 52–76, 2019.

- [12] W. Yendriani, "The Correlation between Students' Mastery of Simple Past Tense and Their Ability to Write Recount Paragraphs at the Eleventh Grade of MAN 2 Model Pekanbaru." pp. 5–10, 2019.
- [13] P. K. and M., *Watkins "Genre, Text, grammar Technologies for teaching and assessing writing.* Univ. New South Wales Press Ltd Univ. New South Wales Sydney NSW, 2012.
- [14] D. S. K. R. Ravita and Badawi, "The Correlation between Students' Mastery of Simple Past Tense and Their Ability in Writing Recount Text at the Eleventh Graders of SMAN 01 Kotabumi Academic Year 2020/2021." 2021.
- [15] EJames, "Students' Mastery of Past Tense and the Ability in Writing," *ebooksclub.org__Assessing_Grammar__Cambridge_Language_Assessment_.pdf.*" 2005.
- [16] D. M. Marbun, L. A. Oppusunggu, T. V Pardede, and J. N. Tampubolon, "Strategies to Olve Writing Difficulties on Recount Text for Junior High School in SMP Negeri 8 Pematang Siantar," vol. 2, no. 11. pp. 39–45, 2022.
- [17] K. Uchiyama, "English Verb Tenses : An informal but extensive reference by." pp. 1–148, 2006. [Online]. Available: <http://repository.binus.ac.id/2009-2/content/G0472/G047215845.pdf>
- [18] C. A. Boardman, "Writing to Communicate." 2008.
- [19] L. Tulak, Jamiluddin, and Nadrun, "Correlation between mastery of simple past tense and the ability in writing recount text at the tenth grade," *J. English Lang. Teach. Soc.*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2016, pp. 2331–1841, 2016, [Online]. Available: <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/242322-correlation-between->
- [20] F. N. Lestari and Rachmania, "The correlation between students' mastery of simple past tense and their ability in writing recount text," *Lang. Educ. J.*, vol. 6, no. 02, pp. 85–94, 2021, doi: 10.52237/lej.v6i02.283.
- [21] T. S. Romansyah, "The Relationship among Students' Mastery of Past Tense, Self-Motivation, and Their Writing Ability of Recount Text," vol. 3, no. 2. p. 6, 2021.
- [22] J. W, "Creswell, Educational Research Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research." 2012.
- [23] I. Etikan, S. A. Musa, and R. S. A. Department, "Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling," *Am. J. Theor. Appl. Stat.*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 1–4, 2016, doi: 10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11.
- [24] S. M. F. Bahri, "Critical Thinking Ability," vol. 08, no. 02. pp. 233–252, 2019.
- [25] M. G. Lodico, D. T. Spaulding, and K. H. Voegtle, "Self-Developed Measures and Qualitative Measurement." 2006.
- [26] A. Khairunisa, Nadrun, and Rachmania, "The Correlation between Students' Grammar Mastery and Writing Skill," *Correl. Between Students' Gramm. Mastery Writ. Ski*, vol. 6, pp. 1–11, 2018.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

