

## **An Analysis of Regular Verb Vocabulary Mastery in Recount Texts of Grade 10 Students at SMA Teladan Pematangsiantar**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes the mastery of regular verb vocabulary in recount texts written by tenth-grade students of SMA Teladan Pematangsiantar. Employing a descriptive mixed-methods approach, the research involved 39 students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a writing test as the main instrument, supported by classroom observation and a questionnaire. Students were asked to write recount texts based on their personal experiences, and the regular verbs used were analyzed for accuracy. The findings reveal that students' mastery of regular verbs is generally high, with a mean score of 88.03, categorized as Excellent. Most students demonstrated accurate use of regular verb forms, although some errors were still evident. The results also indicate that students' difficulties are influenced by limited practice and first language interference. Overall, the study shows that while students have a strong understanding of regular verb usage in recount texts, continued instructional support is necessary to enhance grammatical accuracy. Pedagogically, the findings suggest that explicit instruction combined with focused practice and corrective feedback can further strengthen students' mastery of regular verbs in EFL writing contexts.

### **Introduction**

Language plays a fundamental role in human communication, enabling individuals to express ideas, emotions, and experiences across social and cultural contexts. As emphasized by Sapir (1921), language functions as a system of symbols that supports both intellectual development and social interaction. In educational settings, language is not only a medium of communication but also a tool for constructing knowledge and participating in academic discourse.

In Indonesia, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) and is considered essential for academic achievement and global communication, particularly at the secondary school level. Among the four language skills, writing is widely regarded as the most complex because it requires learners to generate ideas, organize them coherently, select appropriate

vocabulary, and apply grammatical rules accurately (Harmer, 2007). These demands make writing a persistent challenge for Indonesian EFL learners.

Vocabulary mastery plays a crucial role in writing development. Nation (2001) argues that vocabulary knowledge underpins learners' ability to convey meaning accurately in written texts. In the Indonesian senior high school curriculum, students are required to produce various text genres, including recount texts. Recount texts focus on retelling past events in chronological order (Derewianka & Paltridge, 2002), making the use of the simple past tense particularly regular verbs a central linguistic feature.

Although regular verbs follow predictable morphological rules, EFL learners often experience difficulties in forming and using them accurately. Spelling variations in past tense forms frequently result in errors such as omission, misformation, and overgeneralization. These problems negatively affect the clarity and grammatical accuracy of students' recount writing.

Previous studies have confirmed the relationship between vocabulary mastery, grammatical accuracy, and recount writing ability. Nurliani (2019) reported that vocabulary and simple past tense mastery significantly influence students' recount writing performance. Mustika, Maryam, and Yugafiati (2020) found that learners often struggle with applying correct linguistic features, particularly verb forms. Similarly, Syafitri and Ananda (2022) identified misformation and omission as dominant regular verb errors, largely influenced by first language interference. However, most of these studies focus on general grammar or writing problems and do not provide a detailed analysis of regular verb mastery within recount texts.

Based on preliminary observations at SMA Teladan Pematangsiantar, tenth-grade students still demonstrate limited control over regular verb usage in recount writing. Students frequently rely on base forms, repeat the same verbs, or apply Indonesian sentence patterns, indicating insufficient morphological awareness and strong L1 interference.

Despite existing research on EFL writing, studies that specifically examine regular verb vocabulary mastery in recount texts using detailed error analysis within the local context of SMA Teladan Pematangsiantar remain limited. This gap highlights the need for focused research that isolates regular verb usage as a core component of recount writing.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the level of regular verb vocabulary mastery among tenth-grade students, identify the most common error types in recount texts, and explore the factors contributing to these difficulties. By positioning regular verb mastery as an analytical lens, this study contributes to a more precise understanding of grammatical challenges in EFL writing and offers pedagogical insights for improving instructional practices in teaching recount texts.

## **Method**

### **A. Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive mixed-methods research design, integrating qualitative and quantitative data to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students'

mastery of regular verb vocabulary in recount texts. The qualitative component was used to analyze patterns of verb usage, error types, and contextual factors influencing students' writing, while the quantitative component was applied to measure students' mastery levels through scores, frequencies, and percentages.

This design aligns with Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), who state that mixed-methods research enables researchers to triangulate findings and strengthen interpretation by combining numerical trends with qualitative insights. In this study, qualitative analysis served as the primary analytical lens, while quantitative data supported the description of students' performance levels.

## **B. Participants and Sampling**

The population of this study consisted of 39 students from class X-2 of SMA Teladan Pematangsiantar in the 2025/2026 academic year. All students in the class were included as research participants.

Purposive sampling was applied based on objective criteria relevant to the research objectives. Class X-2 was selected because (1) the students had completed instruction on recount texts and the simple past tense, (2) their English proficiency represented the average level of tenth-grade students as indicated by previous semester assessment results, and (3) the class characteristics allowed for the examination of regular verb usage in authentic writing contexts. According to Sugiyono (2019), purposive sampling is appropriate when participants possess characteristics directly related to the research focus.

## **C. Research Instruments**

To ensure data triangulation and methodological rigor, three instruments were employed: a writing test, an observation sheet, and a questionnaire.

### **1. Writing Test**

The writing test functioned as the primary instrument. Students were instructed to write a recount text based on personal experiences (e.g., *My Holiday* or *My School Trip*). The test assessed students' ability to use regular verbs accurately in an authentic writing task.

Content validity was ensured by aligning the test prompts with the senior high school English curriculum and recount text indicators. To enhance reliability, a clear scoring rubric focusing on regular verb accuracy was used, and the scoring criteria were consistently applied across all student texts (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018).

### **2. Observation Sheet**

An observation sheet was used to record students' engagement, participation, and observable difficulties during the writing process. The observation focused on behaviors related to vocabulary selection, verb formation, and writing strategies. These qualitative data supported the interpretation of students' performance and helped identify non-linguistic influencing factors.

### 3. Questionnaire

A questionnaire consisting of ten statements on a five-point Likert scale was administered after the writing test. The questionnaire aimed to identify internal and external factors affecting students' mastery of regular verbs, including learning habits, exposure to English, and feedback practices.

Construct validity was ensured by adapting items from established EFL learning motivation and vocabulary studies. The questionnaire was reviewed by an English education expert to ensure clarity and relevance.

### D. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted in three stages. First, students completed the writing test in the classroom under the researcher's supervision to ensure authenticity. Second, classroom observation was carried out simultaneously to record students' behaviors and difficulties during the writing activity. Third, students completed the questionnaire to provide supporting data regarding their learning experiences and challenges.

This sequential procedure ensured systematic data collection and alignment with the research objectives (Creswell, 2018).

### E. Data Analysis

Qualitative data from students' written texts and observations were analyzed using thematic and error analysis procedures. The analysis involved (1) identifying all regular verbs used in the texts, (2) coding verb forms as correct or incorrect, (3) categorizing errors into types such as omission, misformation, and overgeneralization, and (4) interpreting patterns related to linguistic and non-linguistic factors (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2019).

Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively by calculating scores, frequencies, percentages, and mean values to determine students' mastery levels. The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings enabled a deeper and more reliable interpretation of regular verb mastery in recount texts.

### Results and Discussion

The data obtained from the writing test were analyzed using a descriptive quantitative approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2021).

$$\text{Score Percentage} = \frac{\text{Total Correct Answers}}{\text{Total Items}} \times 100$$

Each correct use of a regular verb was awarded one point, while incorrect forms received zero points. Students' mastery levels were classified based on percentage scores adapted from Hidayat and Sari (2024).

Score Range	Category
86-100	Excellent
776-85	Good
60-75	Fair
<60	Poor

These categories were used to classify individual mastery levels and the overall class performance. Additional analysis focused on:

- (1) accuracy of regular verb formation,
- (2) spelling patterns of -ed verbs, and
- (3) consistency of past tense use in recount structures.

1. *Table 1.*

2. *The Test Scores of 39 Students*

No.	Initial of the Student's Name	Score
1.	OCM	85
2.	WS	95
3.	BF	95
4.	DAF	90
5.	KTL	100
6.	DA	90
7.	RAS	85
8.	MDH	90
9.	PP	90
10.	BL	90
11.	SMP	90
12.	CNS	90
13.	A	90
14.	JG	90
15.	TA	90
16.	NA	90
17.	PG	65

18.	NSPN	100
19.	LP	80
20.	PS	90
21.	FRA	90
22.	AS	80
23.	IP	90
24.	FW	90
25.	CRS	80
26.	SID	100
27.	TD	100
28.	AAD	90
29.	IHP	85
30.	IP2	90
31.	DSR	100
32.	JHB	95
33.	MS	100
34.	RS	95
35.	JRL	85
36.	KBS	90
37.	ZN	75
38.	VTP	88
39.	RDN	92
TOTAL		3433
AVERAGE		88.03

The results indicate that the students' mastery of regular verb vocabulary is generally high, with a mean score of 88.03, categorized as *Excellent*. This finding suggests that most students are able to recognize and apply regular verb forms appropriately when writing recount texts. The high overall performance may be attributed to students' familiarity with recount text structures and repeated exposure to simple past tense forms in classroom instruction.

However, reliance on the mean score alone does not fully represent students' actual mastery. A closer examination of students' written texts reveals recurring errors in regular verb usage, particularly in the formation of -ed endings, spelling changes (e.g., consonant doubling and *y-to-i* transformation), omission of past tense markers, and inconsistency in tense use within the same text. These findings indicate that while students demonstrate surface-level mastery, their control of morphological rules remains partial.

From a morphological perspective, these errors reflect learners' incomplete acquisition of English inflectional morphology. According to Ellis (2006), EFL learners often experience difficulty internalizing grammatical morphemes that do not exist in their first language. Indonesian verbs are not inflected for tense, which explains students' frequent omission of the -ed marker. This phenomenon supports the theory of negative transfer or L1 interference, where learners rely on their first language structures when producing the target language (Odlin, 1989).

In addition, spelling-related errors suggest that students tend to overgeneralize regular verb rules without fully understanding orthographic constraints. This aligns with previous studies by Syafitri and Ananda (2022), who found that misformation and omission errors dominate students' regular verb usage due to limited exposure and insufficient corrective feedback. Compared to earlier research, the findings of this study confirm that high test scores do not necessarily indicate complete grammatical accuracy, particularly at the morphological level.

Another factor that may influence the high average score is task difficulty. The writing task allowed students to select familiar topics, which may have encouraged the repeated use of common regular verbs such as *played*, *visited*, and *watched*. This repetition could inflate mastery scores while masking deeper grammatical weaknesses. Therefore, although the scoring criteria were systematically applied, the results should be interpreted cautiously.

Pedagogically, these findings highlight the importance of moving beyond form recognition toward form control. Explicit instruction on regular verb morphology, increased contextualized writing practice, and focused corrective feedback are necessary to help students internalize inflectional rules. Integrating error-based feedback can assist learners in developing greater grammatical awareness and improving overall writing accuracy.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the mastery of regular verb vocabulary among tenth-grade students of SMA Teladan Pematangsiantar is generally high, as indicated by an average score of 88.03, which falls into the *Excellent* category. Most students demonstrate the ability to use regular verbs appropriately in recount texts to express past actions, suggesting adequate familiarity with basic simple past tense structures.

Nevertheless, the presence of recurring errors such as misformation of -ed endings, spelling inaccuracies, omission of past tense markers, and inconsistency in tense usage

indicates that students' grammatical mastery remains partial. These findings suggest that students tend to achieve surface-level accuracy while still struggling to internalize English morphological rules, particularly inflectional markers that are absent in their first language.

From a theoretical perspective, this study supports second language acquisition theories emphasizing the role of first language transfer in shaping learners' interlanguage development. The frequent omission and misformation of regular verbs reflect negative transfer from Indonesian, a language that does not inflect verbs for tense. This finding reinforces previous claims that morphological features with low perceptual salience pose persistent challenges for EFL learners.

Pedagogically, the findings highlight the importance of explicit grammar instruction that goes beyond rule recognition toward consistent application. Teachers are encouraged to provide contextualized writing tasks, emphasize regular verb morphology through focused practice, and deliver corrective feedback that targets specific error patterns. Such instructional approaches can facilitate deeper grammatical awareness and improve learners' writing accuracy.

Overall, this study contributes to EFL writing research by offering empirical evidence that high achievement scores do not necessarily reflect complete grammatical mastery. By isolating regular verb usage in recount texts within a specific educational context, this research provides both theoretical insight into morphological acquisition and practical guidance for improving grammar-focused writing instruction. Future studies may extend this research by examining longitudinal development or comparing regular and irregular verb mastery across different learner levels.

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