

## *Analysis Of Student Error In Writing Descriptive Text*

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**Abstract:** *This research aims to analyze the errors made by students in writing descriptive texts. The study employed a descriptive qualitative research method and involved 12 students from the Department of English Education at UINSU as research participants. Data was collected through documentation, specifically gathering 12 descriptive texts written by the students. The results of the analysis indicate common errors in descriptive writing, with punctuation errors comprising the largest percentage at 33%. Students often struggle with proper punctuation usage, leading to unclear sentence structures. Word choice errors were the second most prevalent at 13%, reflecting challenges in selecting appropriate and accurate words for descriptions. Additional significant errors included word order (12%), tense agreement (12%), capitalization (6%), verb form (6%), verb tense (6%), and pronoun agreement (6%). Less common errors were observed in article usage (3%) and spelling mistakes (3%). These findings emphasize the areas that require attention and improvement for students to enhance their descriptive writing skills.*

**Keywords:** *Student errors, Descriptive writing, Error analysis*

### **A. Introduction**

Writing is a multifaceted and expressive process of translating thoughts, ideas, and emotions into a tangible form using a system of symbols, such as words and characters, for communication and preservation (Powell, 2009). It encompasses the art of crafting coherent and meaningful compositions that convey information, convey a message, evoke emotions, entertain, educate, or persuade readers. Writing can take various forms, including narratives, essays, poetry, articles, and more, enabling individuals to explore and share their creativity, knowledge, and perspectives with others, bridging gaps of time and space through the power of language and written expression (Graham, & Harris, 2005).

Writing encompasses various forms and styles that cater to different purposes and audiences. Some common kinds of writing include narrative writing, where stories are crafted to entertain or convey personal experiences; expository writing, which focuses on explaining

and informing, presenting facts and analysis; persuasive writing, aimed at convincing and influencing readers' opinions or actions through logical arguments and appeals to emotions; descriptive writing, where vivid details are used to paint a sensory picture and create a sensory experience for the reader. These different kinds of writing provide individuals with versatile tools to convey ideas, express emotions, entertain, educate, and engage readers in diverse ways (Hahn, 2005).

Descriptive writing is a form of writing that aims to create a vivid and sensory experience for the reader by using detailed and evocative language. It goes beyond simply relaying information and delves into the realm of capturing the essence of a person, place, object, or experience through rich imagery and meticulous descriptions (Hollaway, 2004). Descriptive writing employs various techniques, such as utilizing sensory details (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch), employing figurative language (metaphors, similes), and selecting precise adjectives and adverbs to paint a vibrant and immersive picture in the reader's mind. It strives to engage the senses, evoke emotions, and transport the reader to the depicted scene, enabling them to feel a connection with the subject matter (Nair, & Sanai, 2018). Whether describing a breathtaking landscape, a character's appearance and personality, or a memorable event, descriptive writing invites readers to experience the world through the writer's unique perspective, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the subject being described (Ackerman, 1991).

Learning descriptive writing is essential as it equips individuals with a powerful tool to effectively communicate ideas, evoke emotions, and create vivid imagery in the minds of readers. It enhances one's ability to paint a detailed picture, capturing the essence of people, places, objects, or experiences, and allowing readers to engage with the written content on a deeper level. Descriptive writing fosters creativity and imagination, encouraging individuals to explore and experiment with language, metaphor, and sensory details to bring their words to life (Namasivayam, et al., 2017).

In the previous research by Sadiyah & Royani (2019) the errors in writing descriptive text in this research include verb agreement, pronoun, usage (article and preposition), spelling, capitalization, and sentence pattern. Additionally, according to the research by Batubara, Herwanis, & Safitriana (2021), the errors in writing descriptive texts of seventh-grade students of SMP N 4 Takengon came from three aspects: adjectives, conjunctions, and present tense.

Dewi and Huda (2020) found errors in the descriptive writing by the students. In their research they found unnecessary insertion or overgeneralization of plural marker –s, inappropriate selection of quantifier, article, determiner, omission of suffix –s, -es, -ed, and -ing, inappropriate form after modal verb, omission of direct object, unnecessary insertion of preposition, inappropriate selection or usage of preposition, dangling modifier, squinting modifier, jumbled-up or illogical sentences, incomplete or fragmented sentences, run-on sentence, inappropriate coordinating conjunction, inappropriate subordinating conjunction, and inappropriate combination of conjunction.

The research on the analysis of student errors in writing descriptive text is crucial in identifying and understanding the specific linguistic areas where students commonly make mistakes. The studies mentioned above, conducted by Sadiyah & Royani (2019), Batubara, Herwanis, & Safitriana (2021), and Dewi and Huda (2020), highlight various categories of errors found in students' descriptive writing. These errors encompass verb agreement, pronoun usage, articles, prepositions, spelling, capitalization, sentence patterns, adjectives, conjunctions, present tense, plural markers, quantifiers, determiners, suffixes, modal verbs, direct objects, prepositional usage, modifiers, sentence structure, and conjunction combinations. The correlation between these findings and the purpose of the research lies in the identification of specific error patterns and areas of weakness that students face in writing descriptive text. Understanding these errors aids educators in developing targeted instructional approaches to address and improve students' proficiency in descriptive writing. It also highlights the importance of comprehensive writing instruction that targets a range of linguistic aspects to ensure students' overall language development and effective communication skills.

The purpose of conducting research on the analysis of student errors in writing descriptive text is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the specific challenges and recurring mistakes students encounter when crafting descriptive compositions. By identifying and analyzing these errors, researchers can provide valuable insights into the areas where students struggle the most, such as vocabulary usage, sentence structure, coherence, and so on.

## **B. Research Method**

This research employed a qualitative research design, specifically descriptive qualitative research. The research focuses on 12 EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students from the Department of English Education at UINSU. The primary technique used for data collection is documentation, which involves collecting the descriptive texts written by the students.

To analyze the data collected, a suitable approach would be thematic analysis. This involves identifying and categorizing recurring themes or patterns within the students' writing. The researchers would carefully examine the collected descriptive texts to identify common errors and linguistic challenges faced by the students. The analysis would involve coding the errors and organizing them into meaningful categories or themes, such as verb agreement, pronoun usage, articles, prepositions, spelling, capitalization, sentence patterns, and so on. By systematically analyzing the data, the researchers can gain insights into the specific areas where students make errors in writing descriptive texts.

## C. Finding and Discussion

### 1. Finding

This research aims to find out the types of errors appear in the descriptive texts of students of the Department of English Education, UINSU. This research was conducted using the documentation method, namely collecting student descriptive texts that they had made. The researcher collected 12 student descriptive texts to be analyzed to find out what errors there were. The researcher carried out the analysis process by reading carefully and in detail 12 descriptive texts to find errors and categorize these errors. The following are the types of errors found in the descriptive texts of 12 students of the Department of English Education, UINSU

No	Type of error	Amount	Percentage
1	Article Usage	1	3%
2	Word Choice	6	13%
3	Punctuation	15	33%
4	Word Order	5	12%
5	Capitalization	3	6%
6	Tense Agreement	5	12%
7	Verb Form	3	6%
8	Verb Tense	3	6%
9	Pronoun Agreement	3	6%
10	Spelling Mistake	1	3%
	Total	45	100%

The data provided reveals the types of errors commonly made by students in descriptive writing. Among the various categories, punctuation errors accounted for the largest percentage, representing 33% of the total errors. Students often struggle with using proper punctuation marks, resulting in unclear sentence structures. Word choice errors followed closely behind at 13%, indicating difficulties in selecting appropriate and accurate words for their descriptions. Other significant errors included word order (12%), tense agreement (12%), capitalization (6%), verb form (6%), verb tense (6%),

pronoun agreement (6%). The less error are article usage (3%) and spelling mistake (3%). These findings highlight the areas where students need to focus their attention to improve their descriptive writing skills.

In conclusion, the data highlights the specific areas where students frequently make errors in descriptive writing. The high occurrence of punctuation errors emphasizes the importance of mastering punctuation rules to ensure clarity and coherence in their sentences. Additionally, word choice, word order, and tense agreement errors demonstrate the need for students to enhance their language skills and understanding of grammar concepts. By addressing these common errors through practice, guidance, and attention to detail, students can enhance the quality and accuracy of their descriptive writing, ultimately becoming more proficient and effective communicators.

The data provided represents the types of errors commonly made by students in descriptive writing. The following is an explanation and an example of the data:

- a. Article Usage 1 (3%): This refers to errors related to the use of articles (a, an, the) in sentences. Students may misuse or omit articles when describing nouns or objects.

Example:

- Incorrect: "I saw dog running in street."

Correct: "I saw a dog running in the street."

- b. Word Choice 6 (13%): Word choice errors occur when students use inappropriate or inaccurate words in their writing. This could involve selecting words with incorrect meanings or using words that do not fit the context.

Example:

- Incorrect: "the night market is in great demand"

Correct: "the night market is highly demanded."

- Incorrect: "to see penguins we have to visit a place called the Penguin Kingdom inside we can see penguins behind glass."

Correct: "to see penguins, we have to visit a place called the Penguin Kingdom where we can see penguins behind glass."

- c. Punctuation 15 (33%): Punctuation errors involve mistakes in using punctuation marks such as commas, periods, question marks, and exclamation points. Students may misuse or omit punctuation marks, leading to incorrect sentence structure or unclear meaning.

Example:

- Incorrect: "One of the streets in the city of Yogyakarta which is situated in the unique area of Yogyakarta is called Malioboro."

Correct: "One of the streets in the city of Yogyakarta, which is situated in the unique area of Yogyakarta, is called Malioboro."

- Incorrect: "I would like to introduce an older cousin sister by the name of "Siti khadijah Marpaung" I call her 'buk ijah' and she is 3 years older than me."

Correct: "I would like to introduce an older cousin sister by the name of Siti Khadijah Marpaung. I call her 'buk ijah, and she is 3 years older than me."

- d. Word Order 5 (12%): Word order errors occur when the arrangement of words in a sentence is incorrect or unnatural. This can lead to confusion and make the sentence sound awkward or unclear.

Example:

- Incorrect: "is the city of Medan"

Correct: "is Medan city"

- Incorrect: "After many places that have been visited and feel tired around there are selling food and drinks."

Correct: "After visiting many places and feeling tired, there are food and drinks being sold around."

- e. Capitalization 3 (6%): Capitalization errors involve incorrect or inconsistent use of capital letters. Students may fail to capitalize proper nouns, the first word of a sentence, or other words that require capitalization.

Example:

- Incorrect: "Aksara park is a night market"

Correct: "Aksara Park is a night market."

- Incorrect: "My friend's name is cut"

Correc: "My friend's name is Cut"

- f. Tense Agreement 5 (12%): Tense agreement errors occur when there is inconsistency or incorrect usage of verb tenses within a sentence or paragraph. Students may switch between past, present, and future tenses without proper agreement.

Example:

- Incorrect: "Aksara Park was a cheerful place"  
Correct: "Aksara Park is a cheerful place."
- Incorrect: "Aksara park was a crowded and busy place"  
Correct: "Aksara Park is a crowded and busy place"

- g. Verb Form 3 (6%): Verb form errors refer to mistakes in using the correct form of a verb in a sentence. This includes errors such as using an incorrect verb tense or failing to conjugate verbs correctly.

Example:

- Incorrect: "can be play"  
Correct: "can be played."
- Incorrect: "I ask that and search on google"  
Correct: "I asked about it and searched on Google."

- h. Verb Tense 3 (6%): Verb tense errors involve using the wrong verb tense in a sentence, leading to inconsistency or confusion in the timeline of events.

Example:

- Incorrect: "be felling happy"  
Correct: "feel happy."
- Incorrect: "they might be felling dizzy"  
Correct: "they might feel dizzy."

- i. Pronoun Agreement 3 (6%): Pronoun agreement errors occur when there is a mismatch between pronouns and their antecedents (the nouns they refer to). This can result in unclear or incorrect references within a sentence or paragraph.

Example:

- Incorrect: "She looks very cute when he smiles because he has crooked teeth."  
Correct: "She looks very cute when she smiles because she has crooked teeth."
- Incorrect: "My friend's name is cut, he is wearing a gray shirt and is combined with a pink hijab."  
Correct: "My friend's name is Cut. She is wearing a gray shirt and a pink hijab."

- j. Spelling Mistake 1 (3%): Spelling mistakes refer to errors in the correct spelling of words. Students may misspell words, leading to inaccuracies and potential confusion in the reader's understanding.

Example:

- Incorrect: "what else is this monen with our parents where their age is also consumed by time"
- Correct: "what else is this moment with our parents, where their age is also consumed by time"

It's important for students to be aware of these common errors in descriptive writing and strive to improve their skills in each area. By focusing on these specific areas of improvement, students can enhance the clarity, coherence, and accuracy of their descriptive writing.

## **2. Discussion**

The data findings reveal several common errors made by students in their writing. There are: Article Usage, Word Choice, Punctuation, Word Order, Capitalization, Tense Agreement, Verb Form, Verb Tense, Pronoun Agreement, and Spelling Mistake. The data provided reveals the types of errors commonly made by students in descriptive writing. Among the various categories, punctuation errors accounted for the largest percentage, representing 33% of the total errors. Students often struggle with using proper punctuation marks, resulting in unclear sentence structures. Word choice errors followed closely behind at 13%, indicating difficulties in selecting appropriate and accurate words for their descriptions. Other significant errors included word order (12%), tense agreement (12%), capitalization (6%), verb form (6%), verb tense (6%), pronoun agreement (6%). The less error are article usage (3%) and spelling mistake (3%). These findings highlight the areas where students need to focus their attention to improve their descriptive writing skills.

One prevalent issue is Article Usage, where students misapply or omit articles (a, an, the) when describing nouns or objects. This can result in unclear or incomplete expressions. Another significant error is Word Choice, which involves using inappropriate or inaccurate words that do not fit the context or convey the intended meaning. This can lead to confusion and hinder effective communication. Punctuation errors, such as misusing or omitting punctuation marks, contribute to incorrect sentence structure and ambiguity in meaning. Word Order errors also impact sentence clarity, as incorrect arrangement of words can make the sentence sound awkward or unclear. Capitalization errors involve inconsistent or incorrect use of capital letters, which can



affect the proper formatting of proper nouns and sentence beginnings. Tense Agreement errors occur when students inconsistently or incorrectly use verb tenses, causing confusion in the timeline of events. Verb Form errors relate to using incorrect verb forms or failing to conjugate verbs properly, impacting the accuracy of the sentence. Similarly, Verb Tense errors involve using the wrong verb tense, further leading to inconsistency and confusion. Pronoun Agreement errors result from mismatches between pronouns and their antecedents, creating unclear or incorrect references. Lastly, Spelling Mistakes, although less frequent, can introduce inaccuracies and potential confusion due to incorrect spellings. Recognizing these common errors can help students improve their writing skills and enhance the clarity and effectiveness of their written communication.

This research revealed common errors in student writing, including article usage, word choice, punctuation, word order, capitalization, tense agreement, verb form, verb tense, pronoun agreement, and spelling mistakes. These findings are in line with the previous research by Saidah and Royani (2019), which identified subject-verb agreement, capitalization errors, and spelling mistakes as primary concerns. However, the main research expands the understanding by examining additional areas of error, emphasizing the need for comprehensive grammar instruction. Teachers should address multiple aspects of language usage to help students minimize errors and improve their writing skills. By doing so, educators can effectively support students in overcoming these challenges and enhancing their overall writing abilities.

The findings in this research build upon the previous research conducted by Batubara, Herwanis, and Safitrian (2021), which found writing errors on descriptive text such as adjectives, conjunctions, and present tense usage. By comparing these two studies, we can identify a broader range of writing errors that students commonly encounter. This highlights the importance of addressing multiple areas of language usage in writing instruction to help students improve their overall writing skills and minimize errors.

This research findings align with the previous research conducted by Dewi and Huda (2020), who specifically focused on errors in writing descriptive texts and identified 12 types of errors, such as incomplete sentences, dangling modifiers, improper preposition usage, omission of verb suffixes, incorrect form after modal verbs, jumbled-up sentences, and inappropriate selection of articles and determiners. By comparing these two studies, we can observe the overlap and consistency in the

types of errors students commonly encounter in their writing. This emphasizes the significance of addressing these specific areas of weakness in writing instruction to improve students' overall writing proficiency and accuracy. Educators can utilize these research findings to design targeted interventions and provide effective feedback to help students address these specific error types and enhance their writing skills.

#### **D. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the data findings highlight common errors made by students in their writing. These errors encompass various aspects of language usage, including article usage, word choice, punctuation, word order, capitalization, tense agreement, verb form, verb tense, pronoun agreement, and spelling mistakes. These errors can impede the clarity and effectiveness of written communication, leading to confusion and misunderstandings. However, by understanding these common pitfalls and actively working to address them, students can improve their writing skills and enhance their ability to convey ideas accurately and coherently. Developing a strong grasp of grammar, vocabulary, punctuation rules, and spelling conventions is essential for producing clear, polished, and professional writing. Through practice, attention to detail, and seeking feedback, students can overcome these errors and cultivate stronger writing abilities that will serve them well in academic, professional, and personal contexts.

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