An Analysis on the Errors of the Tenth Grade Students Writing on the Descriptive Text

Wae Asae Wachi[1], Henri Fatkhurrohman[2], Yeni Mardiyana Devanti [3]

[1](English Department, Faculty, of Teacher Training and Education English Language Education Program, Indonesia)

[2](English Department, Faculty, of Teacher Training and Education English Language Education Program, Indonesia)

[3](English Department, Faculty, of Teacher Training and Education English Language Education Program, Indonesia)

Article Info	Abstract
	This study aims to analyze the common errors made by tenth-grade students in writing descriptive texts and to identify the causes of these errors. Conducted at SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari in the 2024/2025 academic year, the research employed a qualitative descriptive design. Data were collected through classroom observations, students' written texts, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis reveals that students made various types of errors, including grammatical, lexical, spelling, and structural errors. The causes of these errors are categorized into three major factors: interlingual interference, intralingual interference, and carelessness. The findings indicate that students need more intensive writing practice and guidance in grammar and text structure. This study suggests that English teachers should design more structured and motivating writing exercises to reduce students' writing difficulties.

Introduction

Writing is one of the essential language skills in English learning, especially in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Among the various types of texts taught in Indonesian senior and vocational high schools, *descriptive text* plays an important role as it helps students express ideas about people, places, or objects in detail using proper grammar and vocabulary. However, many students still struggle to construct grammatically correct and coherent descriptive texts. These difficulties are reflected in their frequent errors in areas such as grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary choice, and coherence.

Previous studies have highlighted the persistent challenges that Indonesian EFL learners face in writing tasks. According to Sartika and Nurdin (2019), many vocational students lack a proper understanding of text structure, especially in differentiating between

the identification and description components of a descriptive text. Sa'adah (2020) and Chairunnisa (2021) also found that students' limited exposure to writing practice and inadequate feedback contribute significantly to the low quality of their written work.

Error analysis plays a crucial role in understanding students' learning problems. By identifying the types and sources of students' errors, educators can develop more targeted and effective instructional strategies. In the context of EFL writing, errors can be categorized into several types such as interlingual interference (errors influenced by the native language), intralingual interference (errors due to confusion or lack of understanding of the target language), and carelessness (errors due to lack of attention or motivation), as discussed by Syahputri & Masita (2018) and Brown (2002).

This study aims to analyze the errors made by tenth-grade students at SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari in writing descriptive texts. Specifically, the study seeks to answer two questions: (1) What types of errors do students make when writing descriptive texts? and (2) What are the causes of those errors? By understanding the nature and causes of these errors, this research hopes to contribute to improving the teaching of writing in vocational schools, especially in helping students master descriptive texts more effectively.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the types and causes of students' errors in writing descriptive texts. As stated by Ary et al. (2010), qualitative research focuses on understanding phenomena in natural settings through detailed and rich descriptions rather than quantifying variables.

2.1 Research Design

The qualitative descriptive design was chosen to explore students' writing difficulties deeply and contextually. This design allowed the researcher to describe the actual condition of students' writing performance and understand the reasons behind their errors through direct engagement in the learning environment.

2.2 Research Site and Participants

This research was conducted at SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari, Jember, during the academic year 2024/2025. The participants were tenth-grade students, selected purposively because they had received instruction on descriptive texts. The school was chosen due to its accessibility and relevance to the research objectives.

2.3 Data Sources

According to Arikunto (2006), the data source refers to the subject from which data is obtained. In this study, the primary data sources were:

- Students' descriptive writing assignments

- Classroom observations

- Interviews with selected students

The researcher also used herself as an instrument to interpret and analyze the context during observation and interviews.

2.4 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected using three techniques:

- Observation: The researcher acted as a non-participant observer in the classroom. Observations focused on the teaching process of descriptive texts and students' responses during writing activities.

- Interview: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected students to explore their perspectives on writing difficulties. The interviews were conducted in Indonesian to ensure clarity, and responses were translated during analysis.

- Documentation: Students' written works were collected as the primary data for error analysis.

2.5 Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study were:

- An observation checklist to record student and teacher activities

- A set of interview questions to explore students' difficulties and causes of errors

- Students' writing assignments as documents for linguistic error analysis

All instruments were designed to gather qualitative insights related to students' writing performance.

2.6 Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using the interactive model by Miles and Huberman (1984), which includes:

- Data Reduction: The researcher selected and summarized relevant data from observations, interviews, and student texts.

- Data Display: Reduced data were organized into descriptive narratives, thematic categories, and error classifications.

- Conclusion Drawing: Patterns were interpreted to identify error types and their causes, followed by verification through triangulation.

Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

Based on the analysis of students' descriptive text writing and the results of classroom observations and interviews, this study found several categories of errors made by tenth-grade students of SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari. These errors were grouped into four major categories: grammatical errors, lexical and spelling errors, sentence structure errors, and cohesion or style-related issues.

1. Grammatical Errors

Articles: Omission of definite articles (e.g., "in classroom" instead of "in the classroom").

Auxiliary Verbs: Misuse of "have" or missing "be" (e.g., "the chair have 35").

Plurality: Incorrect use of singular/plural nouns (e.g., "object" instead of "objects").

Subject-Verb Agreement: Confusion in verb forms (e.g., "the chair have" instead of "the chairs have").

Tenses: Errors in passive voice (e.g., "the room painted" instead of "the room is painted").

2. Lexical and Spelling Errors

Students frequently wrote incorrect words that affected meaning: e.g., *fine* instead of *find*, *whith* instead of *white*, *cocated* instead of *located*, *tempature* instead of *temperature*.

These errors likely stem from pronunciation interference and lack of vocabulary mastery.

3. Sentence Structure Errors

Unclear or incomplete sentences: e.g., "Causing the room to have a hot tempature…"
Word order issues: e.g., "There is a chair, table…" which lacks parallelism and plurality.

Prepositions: Misuse such as "go in the school" instead of "go to school".

4. Cohesion and Style Issues

Redundancy: e.g., "the table have 16 table"

Unclear references: e.g., "they don't care" without clear antecedents

Parallelism: e.g., "making all students sweating" instead of "making all students sweat"

These indicate a lack of training in cohesive and efficient academic writing.

2. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that the students' difficulties in writing descriptive texts stem from a combination of linguistic limitations and learning-related factors. These are consistent with error analysis theories and are categorized into three main causes: interlingual interference, intralingual interference, and carelessness (Syahputri & Masita, 2018; Brown, 2002).

1. Interlingual Interference

Many of the errors reflect negative transfer from the students' native language (Bahasa Indonesia). For example, students omitted articles or used direct word-by-word translations that are inappropriate in English (e.g., "in classroom", "go in the school"). Indonesian grammar does not use definite/indefinite articles or distinguish between verb tenses the way English does, which leads to errors in English writing.

2. Intralingual Interference

These errors arise from confusion or incomplete understanding of the English system itself. Students had difficulty with subject-verb agreement, passive forms, and complex structures such as relative clauses. For example, "the room painted with white color" reflects a misunderstanding of passive voice. Errors like "which many students use it" indicate confusion about clause formation.

3. Carelessness (Negligence)

Some errors are attributed to lack of attention or motivation. Incomplete sentences, misspellings, and repetitive ideas (e.g., "table have 16 table") suggest that students did not revise their work. Interviews revealed that some students admitted to rushing assignments or not checking their writing carefully, supporting Kurniawan's (2019) claim that low motivation often leads to careless mistakes.

These findings are also in line with studies by Sa'adah (2020) and Chairunnisa (2021), which emphasize that vocational school students often lack sufficient practice and guidance in writing. Even though teachers had provided instruction and correction, the students still faced difficulties due to a weak foundation in English grammar and low exposure to structured writing tasks.

Conclusion

This study investigated the types and causes of errors made by tenth-grade students at SMK Islam Bustanul Ulum Pakusari in writing descriptive texts. The findings revealed that students made frequent errors in grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, and cohesion. Specifically, they struggled with article usage, subject-verb agreement, pluralization, passive voice construction, word choice, spelling, and sentence coherence. These errors not only affected the grammatical accuracy of their writing but also reduced clarity and comprehensibility.

The causes of these errors were grouped into three main categories: interlingual interference, intralingual interference, and carelessness. Interlingual errors reflected the influence of students' native language (Indonesian), especially in article omission and direct translation. Intralingual errors resulted from incomplete understanding of English grammatical rules, while carelessness was linked to a lack of attention, low motivation, and limited revision habits.

These findings suggest that vocational high school students need more intensive and structured writing practice that focuses not only on grammatical accuracy but also on developing awareness of sentence patterns and cohesive writing. Teachers should design learning activities that address both linguistic competence and motivation, such as explicit grammar instruction, peer editing, writing workshops, and integrated feedback sessions. By fostering both skill and discipline in writing, students will gradually reduce their errors and become more competent in producing coherent descriptive texts.

Future research may explore the effectiveness of remedial teaching strategies in reducing writing errors, or compare student performance across different school contexts and proficiency levels.

REFERENCES

Siregar, S. P. E., Sari, F., Sudjoko, & Yundayani, A. (2022). *Dealing with English*

Writing Skills:Through the Eyes of Vocational Students.

Barus, L. M., Dewi, N. L. P. E. S., Paramartha, A. A. G. Y., & Wahyuni, L. G. E. (2024). *Students' Perception on Self-Assessment of Writing Competency at Vocational High School*.

Jimenez, J. L. C. (2024). *Research Writing Difficulties of Senior High School Students*.

Putri, A. L. D., Tambusai, A., & Hasibuan, A. L. (2022). *The Students' Difficulties in Acquiring English Writing*.

Syifa, Q. A., Al-Baekani, A. K., & Srisudarso, M. (2022). *Junior High School Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text*.

Sartika, N., & Nurdin, M. (2019). *Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text Based on Its Generic Structure at the Tenth Grade Student of Vocational High School*.

Sa'adah, A. R. (2020). *The Students' Writing Ability in Descriptive Text*.

Dewi, F. S., & Huda, M. C. (2020). *The Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Writing Descriptive Text by the Tenth Grade Students of SMAN 1 Tulungagung*.

Chairunnisa, M. (2021). *An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text at the First Semester of the Tenth Grade of SMA Muhammadiyah 2 Bandar Lampung*.

Wardani, A. K. (2017-2018). *A Descriptive Study on the Ability in Writing Descriptive Text of the Tenth Grade Students of SMK N 8 Surakarta in 2017/2018 Academic Year*.

Wright, L. (2000). *From Planning to Practice: Implementation Challenges for South Africa's Proposed Language Policy and Plan*.

Ramadan, D. A. T., Wennyta, & Suyadi. (2021). *An Analysis of Students' Difficulties in Writing Descriptive Text at Tenth Grade of SMK Negeri 4 Kota Jambi*.

Kurnia, R., & Kareviati, E. (2021). *Students' Perception in Writing Descriptive Text*.

Sasmiash, E. (2014). *Error Analysis on the Students' Writing of Descriptive Text*.

Chusna, Y. M. M. (2016). *Developing Students' Ability in Writing Descriptive Text: A Case Study in SMA Negeri 1 Wonosari*.

Zendrato, S. I. S., Harefa, H. S., Harefa, A. T., & Telaumbanua, Y. A. (2022/2023).

Wae Asae Wachi, Henri Fatkhurrohman, Yeni Mardiyana Devanti / An Analysis on
the Errors of the Tenth Grade Students Writing on the Descriptive Text

48

*Descriptive Analysis on Writing Exercises in The English Textbook on Students' at
The Tenth Grade of SMA Negeri 1 Gido in 2022/2023.*

Anney, V. N. (2015). *Ensuring the Quality of the Findings of Qualitative Research:
Looking at Trustworthiness Criteria.*

Lestari, O. W., & Yunikawati, N. A. (2017). *Implementation of Learning Model
Cooperative Learning Teams Games Tournament Collaborates With Lottery Card.*

Sugiantiningsih, A. A. P., Weni, I. M., & Hariyanto, T. (2019). *Effect of Bali Province
Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2019 on Pecalang Organizations in Bali.*