



Forms of Spelling Errors in Biography Texts of Grade X Students of SMA Negeri 1 Pancung Soal

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ABSTRACT

Writing in Indonesian has been taught from elementary school to high school. Spelling is one of the learning objectives, but many spelling errors are still found among high school students. This study aims to analyze spelling errors in biographical texts of 10th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Pancung Soal. This study used a qualitative descriptive method. The research data, in the form of biographical texts written by fourteen 10th-grade students, were collected using library techniques. The data on spelling errors were analyzed qualitatively by identifying, classifying, and describing the types of spelling errors. The results showed that the most dominant spelling errors made by students were capitalization errors (38%), followed by punctuation errors (27%), compound word errors (21%), and loanword errors (14%). Spelling errors are caused by students' lack of understanding of Indonesian spelling rules and language habits that do not conform to standard rules. The results of this study are expected to be used as considerations for Indonesian language teachers in improving learning strategies for writing biographical texts with an emphasis on correct spelling.

Keywords: spelling, errors, biography texts

Bentuk Kesalahan Penggunaan Ejaan pada Teks Biografi Siswa Kelas X SMA Negeri 1 Pancung Soal

ABSTRACT

Materi pelajaran menulis dalam bahasa Indonesia telah diajarkan sejak tingkat dasar sampai sekolah menengah menengah. Di antara tujuan pembelajaran itu adalah ejaan namun masih banyak ditemukan kesalahan penggunaan ejaan pada siswa SMA. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesalahan penggunaan ejaan dalam teks biografi siswa kelas X SMA Negeri 1 Pancung Soal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Data penelitian berupa teks biografi yang ditulis oleh empat belas siswa kelas X dikumpulkan menggunakan teknik kepustakaan. Data kesalahan penggunaan ejaan dianalisis secara kualitatif dengan cara mengidentifikasi, mengklasifikasi, dan mendeskripsikan bentuk kesalahan ejaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesalahan ejaan yang paling dominan dilakukan siswa adalah kesalahan penulisan huruf kapital sebesar 38%, diikuti oleh kesalahan tanda baca sebesar 27%), kesalahan penulisan kata gabung sebesar 21%, dan kesalahan penulisan unsur serapan sebanyak 14%. Kesalahan penggunaan ejaan disebabkan oleh kurangnya pemahaman siswa terhadap kaidah ejaan bahasa Indonesia dan kebiasaan berbahasa yang tidak sesuai dengan kaidah baku. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi bahan pertimbangan bagi guru Bahasa Indonesia dalam memperbaiki strategi pembelajaran menulis teks biografi dengan penekanan pada penggunaan ejaan yang benar.

Keywords: bentuk kesalahan, ejaan, teks biografi

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian holds a crucial position as an official medium of communication, a unifying language, and a means of scientific thought for all Indonesians. However, despite being taught from elementary school through high school, proper and correct use of Indonesian still frequently encounters errors, particularly in spelling. Similarly, research by Anggraeni et al. (2024) also shows that Indonesian spelling errors are still common in formal media, such as public service guides. Their research on the Mobile JKN application identified various forms of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors. These findings confirm that spelling errors occur not only in educational settings but also in formal communication contexts, thus ensuring greater emphasis on spelling mastery in Indonesian language learning.

According to Jatmiko (2021), mastering correct spelling is a crucial aspect of the Indonesian language learning process, particularly in writing biographical texts, which require precision in spelling and punctuation. Spelling errors often occur due to students' lack of understanding of applicable Indonesian language rules and their limited mastery of refined spelling rules (Surabaya et al., 2024). Furthermore, suboptimal Indonesian language instruction is also a major cause of spelling errors in students' writing at school (Jatmiko, 2021).

Kartika et al. (2025) stated that the most frequently encountered errors are in spelling, particularly in the use of capital letters, names of people, geographical names, and job titles. Furthermore, errors in diction and punctuation, such as the use of commas and periods, were also found. Other research has shown that incorrect spelling in biographical texts can reduce the quality of writing and hinder the clear delivery of information (Harzoni, 2022). Therefore, analyzing spelling errors is essential as a basis for developing effective Indonesian language learning methods (Yudistira, 2025).

Spelling errors are caused by students' lack of understanding of linguistic rules and limited prac-

tice in writing texts in accordance with the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI) (Anita, 2021). Spelling regulates the writing of letters, words, punctuation, and loanwords so that the meaning of the writing can be conveyed clearly. Without a good mastery of spelling, writing will be difficult for readers to understand. In line with this, Tarigan (1987) emphasized that writing is the most complex language skill because it requires mastery of various linguistic elements, including sentence structure, diction, and spelling.

According to Keraf (2004), errors in spelling can disrupt clarity of meaning and create ambiguity in writing. Therefore, good writing skills depend not only on the ability to structure content but also on accurate spelling. Spelling in Indonesian is regulated in the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI) published by the Language Development and Fostering Agency. PUEBI regulates four main components: letter writing, word writing, punctuation, and loanwords. Mastery of these four components is key to writing effective texts that adhere to linguistic rules.

Various studies indicate that spelling errors in students' writing impact not only linguistic aspects but also cognitive and psychological aspects of language learning (Purwo, 2020). This highlights the need for a learning approach that guides students in understanding the function and importance of correct spelling in relevant contexts, such as in biographical texts (Sitompul et al., 2025). Errors in capitalization, punctuation, and word usage must be systematically identified and corrected as part of optimal language learning (Narwadan, 2023).

Biographical texts are one type of text taught in Indonesian language courses in 10th grade high school students. By studying biographical texts, students learn to write stories about the lives of figures using a structured structure, clear and easy-to-understand language, and adhering to correct spelling rules. However, based on initial observations of the writing of 10th grade students at SMA Negeri 1 Pancung Soal, various spelling errors were still found, such as inappropriate capitaliza-



tion, punctuation errors, and inappropriate spelling of loan words and compound words.

Furthermore, analyzing spelling and punctuation errors in biographical texts also provides insight into how students understand and apply linguistic rules in writing their original works (Febriana, 2023). With a better understanding, teachers can develop more effective, evidence-based teaching strategies to improve students' writing skills, particularly in describing biographies of important figures (Purwo, 2020). This effort supports the improvement of students' writing quality and overall literacy.

Good writing skills require precision in every aspect of the language used. A writer with a good understanding of spelling can express ideas clearly and effectively. Conversely, spelling errors can degrade the quality of writing and obscure the intended meaning. Therefore, writing instruction that emphasizes correct spelling is crucial for improving the quality of students' writing.

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze the types of spelling errors found in biographical texts of grade 10 students at SMA Negeri 1 Pancung Soal. The results of this study are expected to provide an understanding of the types of spelling errors that students often make and become a reference for Indonesian language teachers in improving writing learning strategies that focus on the application of spelling in accordance with PUEBI rules.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method because it aligns with the research objective of in-depth descriptions of spelling errors in student biographical texts. This method attempts to describe linguistic phenomena as they are based on observational data from student writing without any manipulation of variables (Sugiyono, 2019). Qualitative research is used to understand phenomena holistically through descriptions of words and language in natural contexts. The subjects of this study were 14 10th-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Pancung Soal in the 2024/2025

academic year, selected using purposive sampling because they had already received material on writing biographical texts. The data source consisted of student-written biographical texts collected using documentation techniques, namely collecting and transcribing student-written documents in digital form (Arikunto, 2010; Razak, 2017; Balaka, 2012).

Data analysis was conducted based on the steps of language error analysis according to the Ellis and Sidhar model (Tarigan, 1990), including data collection, identification, classification, description, interpretation, and drawing conclusions. The primary research instrument was the researcher herself (human instrument), with the aid of an error analysis sheet and word processing software to facilitate the identification of spelling errors.

Data validity was maintained through method triangulation by comparing the results of manual analysis and automated checks using the spelling and grammar check feature (Sugiyono, 2019), and consulting with Indonesian language teachers to ensure the results aligned with school language practices.

RESULTS

1. Lettering Errors (38%)

The highest number of spelling errors (38%) occurred in lettering, specifically capitalization. This high frequency aligns with the nature of biographical texts, which frequently include proper names, places, titles, and greetings. The dominant errors were found in:

- Proper Names and Titles: Students failed to capitalize the first letter of a figure's name and title.

Example: 1) ir. soekarno, presiden pertama republik indonesia, muhammad harta.

This error indicates that students have not correctly applied capitalization rules. Capital letters must be used for the first letter of a person's name (Ir. Soekarno). Honorary titles, positions, and ranks followed by a person's name (First President of the Republic of Indonesia).

This error often occurs because students are accustomed to writing with lowercase letters in informal or digital contexts (e.g., social media). The correct spelling is Ir. Soekarno, First President of the Republic of Indonesia, Muhammad Hatta.

b. Geographical Names: Mistakes in the spelling of places of birth and death of figures.

Example: suroboya, jakarta, sumatera barat. Errors in data such as Surabaya, Jakarta, and West Sumatra are due to the use of capital letters that do not comply with the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI). Place or regional names, including proper names, should begin with a capital letter. The correct spelling is Surabaya, Jakarta, and West Sumatra. This error indicates that students have not consistently applied the rules for capitalizing geographical names.

2. Punctuation Errors (27%)

Punctuation errors were the second most common type of error found in student biographical texts, accounting for 27% of the total spelling errors. These errors primarily involved the use of commas, periods, and other punctuation marks that did not comply with the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI). Inaccurate punctuation causes sentences to become unclear, meanings to become ambiguous, and the coherence of the text to be disrupted. The following is a detailed description of the types of punctuation errors found in student writing.

a) Incorrect use of commas (,)

The most common error occurred when commas were placed between the subject and predicate of a sentence without inversion. According to PUEBI rules, commas are not used to separate subjects and predicates. For example, in the sentence “Soekarno, adalah presiden pertama Republik Indonesia”, there is an error because a comma should not be placed between the subject and predicate. The correct sentence is “Soekarno adalah presiden pertama Republik Indonesia.”

This type of error indicates that students do not understand the proper function of commas in sentence structure.

b) Incorrect use of the period (.)

This error is characterized by the omission of a period to end a sentence, or the use of a lowercase letter after a period. For example, the sentence: “Beliau lahir di Surabaya pada tahun 1901 kemudian menempuh pendidikan di HBS” should be separated into two sentences with a period, namely “Beliau lahir di Surabaya pada tahun 1901. Kemudian menempuh pendidikan di HBS.” This error indicates that students are not yet accustomed to writing effective sentences by paying attention to sentence boundaries and using capital letters after periods.

c) Incorrect use of commas in details

The next error relates to students' inconsistencies in writing details or lists of elements. Some students use semicolons (;) incorrectly or mix up the use of commas and semicolons within a single detail. For example, in the sentence “Soekarno dikenal sebagai arsitek, orator; dan proklamator” it should be written “Soekarno dikenal sebagai arsitek, orator, dan proklamator.”

This error indicates that students do not yet understand the difference in the function of commas and semicolons in the context of details.

d) Not using commas after inter-sentence conjunctions

This error occurs because students often neglect to use commas after conjunctions such as namun, oleh karena itu, selain itu, dan meskipun demikian

For example, the sentence “Namun siswa masih sering salah dalam menulis ejaan” should be written “Namun, siswa masih sering salah dalam menulis ejaan”

This inaccuracy makes the sentence feel unnatural and difficult to read, as there is no pause to indicate a logical connection between the sentences.



e) Double or Unnecessary Punctuation

Another error found was the excessive or inappropriate use of punctuation, such as colons (:) or commas that appear without a function. For example, the sentence "Tokoh yang dikaguminya adalah: Soekarno" is incorrect because a colon is unnecessary before the object. The correct spelling is "Tokoh yang dikaguminya adalah Soekarno" Double or inappropriate punctuation creates an awkward sentence structure and reduces the effectiveness of the intended message.

3. Writing Combined Words Error (21%)

These 21% of combined word errors were dominated by the writing of prepositions and bound forms that do not comply with Indonesian spelling rules. These errors indicate that students do not fully understand the differences in function and writing rules for these two forms. When writing prepositions such as di, ke, and dari, students tend to combine them with the word that follows them.

a. Writing the Preposition di

Students still combine the preposition di (as a place indicator) with the word that follows it. Example: Soekarno lahir disurabaya pada 6 juni 1901.

The errors found in the spelling of compound words indicate that students do not yet understand the difference between prepositions and bound forms. In the case of the preposition "di," students often combine it with the word that follows it, such as "disurabaya," which should be written separately as "di Surabaya."

b. Writing Bound Forms

Errors also occur with bound forms such as "pasbedah" or "antarakota," which are often written separately, even though spelling rules require them to be written together because they have a complete meaning.

4. Mistakes in Writing Loan Elements (14%)

Mistakes in writing loan elements in student biographical texts are found in the use of words

originating from foreign or regional languages that have not yet been adapted to Indonesian absorption rules. Based on the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (2022), foreign elements can be directly absorbed if they are commonly used or their spelling and pronunciation have been adjusted to conform to the Indonesian phonological system. However, some students do not yet understand these rules, resulting in various errors. These errors are classified as non-standard linguistic interference because they occur due to the imitation of forms from spoken or regional languages without following standard rules. Loan elements should be adapted to Indonesian spelling to make them easier for native speakers to read and pronounce.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the majority of spelling errors made by grade 10 students of SMA Negeri 1 Pancung Soal are intralingual errors. These errors arise because students fail to apply the Indonesian language rules they have learned, not because of the influence of a foreign language.

Ignorance of Indonesian Spelling Rules as a Dominant Factor

The high number of errors in capitalization (38%) and punctuation (27%) strongly supports the conclusion that students' lack of understanding of Indonesian spelling rules is the primary cause. Research by Munaroh and Rosalina (2023) also showed that the most frequent spelling errors were in the use of capital letters and punctuation in descriptive texts by junior high school students. Similarly, Putri and Sitepu (2025) also confirmed that spelling and punctuation errors were the most common errors in students' writing at Nida Suksasat School, Thailand. These errors were largely influenced by mother tongue interference, limited vocabulary, and a lack of targeted writing practice. These findings reinforce the findings of this study that ignorance of writing rules and a lack of basic linguistic mastery are the primary factors causing language errors in students.

In a study by Sa'diyah (2022), spelling errors were also caused by ignorance of applicable rules and a lack of linguistic reference books (PUEBI/ KBBI). The context of the errors in students' biographical texts (proper names, titles, places) supports this interpretation, as students tend to ignore detailed PUEBI (Indonesian Language and Education) rules. The results of this study align with the findings of Siska and Rahmadani (2023), who also found that students' language errors, particularly in spelling and sentence structure, stem from a lack of understanding of correct writing rules. This suggests that similar errors can occur in various writing contexts, including biographical texts.

Interference with Non-Standard Habits

Errors in the writing of loanwords (14%) and compound words (21%) indicate interference with non-standard or spoken language habits. The use of words such as memproklamasikan and tulis disurabaya (written in Indonesian) indicate the influence of spoken pronunciation or the habit of quickly writing prepositions with the following words. This phenomenon indicates that students are not yet fully capable of transliterating from spoken/informal language to formal, rule-bound written language.

Pedagogical Implications

Based on the predominance of errors in capitalization and punctuation, this study suggests that Indonesian language teachers need to improve their teaching strategies. The recommended strategies are:

Increasing the portion of writing exercises focused on editing to improve the accuracy of PUEBI implementation. Emphasizing specific capitalization rules in the context of proper names and titles, which frequently appear in biographical texts.

CONSLUSION

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that spelling errors in biographical texts among 10th-grade students at SMA Negeri 1

Pancung Soal remain quite high. The most prevalent type of error is capitalization errors (38%), followed by punctuation errors (27%), compound word errors (21%), and loanword errors (14%). These errors are primarily caused by students' lack of understanding of the Indonesian Spelling Rules (PUEBI) and the influence of non-standard language habits in everyday communication.

The errors found are intralingual, meaning they occur due to students' lack of understanding of correct linguistic rules, rather than the influence of other languages. The results of this study indicate that students' writing skills, particularly in spelling, still need to be improved through learning strategies that emphasize editing practice, contextual application of PUEBI, and intensive guidance in writing biographical texts. Therefore, this research is expected to serve as a reference for Indonesian language teachers to improve their writing teaching methods so that students are able to produce writing that complies with applicable spelling rules.

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