



Analysis of Indonesian Spelling in Narrative Composition of Grade IV Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

Spelling is an important element in writing because it plays a role in maintaining the accuracy of meaning, clarity of structure, and readability of a sentence. The ability to use correct spelling needs to be possessed by students since elementary school so they are able to produce writing that is in accordance with Indonesian language rules. However, in learning practice, spelling errors are still often found in students' writing. These errors include the use of letters, word spelling, punctuation, and loan elements. This condition indicates that students' understanding and application of Indonesian spelling rules are not yet fully consistent. This study aims to describe the use of Indonesian spelling in narrative essays of fourth-grade elementary school students based on the Indonesian Spelling (EYD) Edition V. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The research subjects were 33 fourth-grade students of SD Negeri 147 Pekanbaru. Research data were obtained through narrative essay writing tests and interviews with students and class teachers to strengthen the findings. Data were analyzed through the stages of identification, classification, and description of errors based on aspects of letter usage, word spelling, punctuation, and loan elements. The results of the study indicate that the use of Indonesian spelling in students' narrative essays is still not fully in accordance with applicable rules. The most common errors were capitalization, prepositional spelling, and punctuation, including periods and commas. Meanwhile, relatively few errors were found in loanwords. The findings of this study indicate that students have grasped basic spelling rules, but still require reinforcement through ongoing learning and writing practice to ensure consistency.

Keywords: spelling, narrative composition, elementary school students

INTRODUCTION

Language is a tool used by humans to communicate with one another. As a tool for human communication, language can take the form of either spoken or written language. Through language, individuals can express their thoughts, feelings, ideas, or arguments to others. The field of study that examines language and its usage within society is known as sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics views language as both a social system and a communication system that is inextricably linked to specific societies and cultures (Hasnitha et al., 2023). Language serves as a distinctive symbol of a country or region. In the Indonesian education

system, Indonesian language instruction is a subject aimed at developing students' language proficiency in both spoken and written forms (Hasanah et al., 2024). One of the key skills cultivated is writing.

Writing is a crucial language skill within the primary school learning process. Through writing activities, students not only learn to express their ideas and concepts but also learn to think in a coherent, logical, and systematic manner. Writing proficiency serves as a foundation for students to comprehend various subjects, given that the majority of the school learning process involves reading and writing activities. Therefore, writing skills

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must be nurtured from the primary school level to ensure students possess strong literacy capabilities. In Indonesian language instruction, writing is classified as a productive skill—alongside listening, speaking, and reading—that students must master. Writing is the act of expressing ideas, concepts, arguments, or feelings in written form. It is a language skill characterized by active and productive engagement, wherein the writer actively conveys their ideas, knowledge, and experiences through writing (Khumaira et al., 2026). According to The Liang Gie (cited in Siswiyanti, 2023), writing is the ability to produce various letters, numbers, names, and punctuation marks. Henry Guntur Tarigan defines writing as a productive and expressive language skill used to communicate indirectly and non-face-to-face with others. Writing is a language skill used to convey ideas, thoughts, experiences, and feelings through written language so that they can be understood by readers (Haryanti, 2023). Furthermore, writing serves as a medium of indirect communication that requires precision in language use to ensure the conveyed message does not lead to misunderstandings (Sihombing et al., 2024). Consequently, writing proficiency requires not only the ability to produce written text but also accuracy in the use of linguistic elements, including Indonesian spelling conventions.

The importance of writing skills is evident in their role in shaping students' literacy capabilities. Literacy encompasses not only reading skills but also the ability to comprehend and convey information in writing. Students with strong writing skills tend to find it easier to express ideas, complete assignments, and grasp the material taught in school. This aligns with the view expressed by Mulyani et al. (2024), who state that writing skills in elementary school play a crucial role in developing a child's foundational literacy. Therefore, writing proficiency is a fundamental skill that warrants significant attention within Indonesian language instruction at the elementary school level.

Good writing skills enable individuals to convey ideas and information effectively (Hikaya et al., 2025). One form of writing practiced in the learning process is the narrative essay—a composition that recounts real or fictional events in a coherent and clear manner. To ensure clarity, such essays must be written in accordance with correct spelling conventions. Learning to write narrative essays is crucial for students, as it forms an integral part of developing their writing skills. Writing proficiency relies on a fundamental understanding of these conventions.

Spelling refers to the rules governing the representation of sounds (words, sentences, etc.) in written form (using letters) and the use of punctuation marks. It can also be defined as a set of writing rules that regulate the use of letters, word formation, and punctuation to ensure the text is clear and easily understood by the reader. Correct spelling serves several important functions: establishing a foundation for grammatical and vocabulary standardization, filtering the influx of foreign linguistic elements into Indonesian, and facilitating reader comprehension (Ritonga et al., 2025). Indonesian spelling rules govern the proper writing of the language, providing clear guidelines that prevent ambiguity or misinterpretation. Mastery of spelling is essential for students because it clarifies meaning and helps readers accurately understand the content. Errors in spelling can make a text difficult to comprehend and may even lead to a distortion of meaning. Therefore, the ability to use spelling correctly should be cultivated from the elementary school level as a foundation for students' writing skills.

However, in practice, many students still make spelling errors—such as mistakes regarding capitalization and punctuation. This issue was also identified during preliminary interviews conducted by the researcher with a teacher at an elementary school in Pekanbaru City, specifically SDN 147 Pekanbaru. The teacher noted that spelling errors persist, particularly in narrative writing. Interviews



revealed that students frequently make spelling-related mistakes—such as omitting periods and commas—and lack consistency in capitalizing the first letters of sentences and proper nouns.

Given this context, the researcher deemed it necessary to conduct a study examining the use of Indonesian spelling conventions in the narrative writing of elementary school students. The findings are expected to provide concrete data that teachers can use to evaluate Indonesian language instruction and to formulate more effective teaching strategies in the future.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method. It aims to describe the application of Indonesian spelling rules in the narrative essays written by fourth-grade students (Class IVC) at SD Negeri 147 Pekanbaru. The research subjects comprised 33 students (18 boys and 15 girls) from Class IVC, with the fourth-grade teacher serving as a supporting informant. The object of the study was the use of Indonesian spelling, specifically covering letter usage, word writing, punctuation, and loanwords.

The primary research data consisted of students' narrative essays on the theme of "Vacation," obtained through a writing test. Supporting data were gathered via semi-structured interviews with the fourth-grade teacher to corroborate the research findings. Primary data sources were the students' essays, while secondary data sources included the Indonesian Spelling Guidelines (EYD 5th Edition), the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), and various relevant articles and publications.

Data collection techniques involved tests and interviews. Tests were used to obtain the students' narrative essays, which were subsequently analyzed based on Indonesian spelling aspects. Interviews were conducted to gather additional information regarding the students' proficiency in

applying Indonesian spelling rules. The collected data were then analyzed descriptively by identifying, classifying, and describing the spelling errors found in the students' essays.

Table 1
Student Spelling Usage Scale

Scale	Percentage	
Scale 1	76%–100%	error rate
Scale 2	51%–75%	error rate
Scale 3	26%–50%	error rate
Scale 4	0%–25%	error rate

RESULTS

This study was conducted at SDN 147 Pekanbaru, involving 33 students from class IVC as research subjects. Data collection was carried out through a narrative writing test themed "Vacation," administered during a single session. The students' narrative essays were collected and analyzed based on Indonesian spelling aspects to serve as research data. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with several students in the following session to obtain information that could support and clarify the analysis results. Additionally, interviews were held with the class teacher to gather supporting data and strengthen the research findings. The results are presented based on Indonesian spelling aspects found in the narrative essays of class IVC students at SDN 147 Pekanbaru, covering letter usage, word writing, punctuation usage, and loanword elements.

Table 2
Summary of Overall Student Spelling Usage Results

Spelling Aspect	Scale 1	Scale 2	Scale 3	Scale 4	Spelling Usage
Letter Usage	4	8	16	5	44.45% Error
Word Writing	0	0	2	31	5.17% Error
Punctuation Usage	0	0	3	30	15.40% Error
Loanword Writing	0	0	0	19	1.34% Error

Table 2 details the use of Indonesian spelling in the students' narrative essays. The aspect of letter usage showed the highest rate of spelling errors compared to the other spelling aspects. Among the 33 students analyzed, 4 fell into scale 1, 8 into scale 2, 16 into scale 3, and 5 into scale 4. The error rate for letter usage reached 44.45%. The most dominant spelling errors identified were related to the use of capital letters. Furthermore, regarding word writing, the majority of students (31) fell into scale 4, while two students were at scale 3. The error rate was 5.17%. The predominant spelling errors occurred in the writing of base words—specifically regarding standard forms—and the use of prepositions.

Regarding punctuation usage, 30 students fell into scale 4 and 3 students into scale 3, with an error rate of 15.40%. The most frequent errors involved the use of commas and periods. Furthermore, regarding the writing of loanwords, all students who employed loanwords demonstrated a low error rate of 1.34%. It should be noted that not all students used loanwords in their narrative compositions; consequently, the number of errors identified in this aspect was relatively low.

Overall, the spelling aspect with the highest number of errors was letter usage, specifically the use of capital letters. Conversely, the aspect with the fewest errors was the writing of loanwords. These findings indicate that fourth-grade students still struggle to apply capitalization rules in accordance with Indonesian spelling standards.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research conducted on the spelling used in fourth-grade students' narrative compositions at SDN 147 Pekanbaru, numerous errors were identified. The analysis for each indicator is as follows:

Letter Usage

Based on the analysis of the fourth-grade students' narrative compositions, the study examined four indicators regarding letter usage: the alphabet, vowels and vowel combinations, consonants and consonant combinations, and the use of capital letters. Regarding letter usage, the most prevalent errors occurred with capitalization. Students failed to capitalize the first letter of sentences, personal names, months, and place names, while also incorrectly placing capital letters in the middle of sentences. This is supported by interview results indicating that, while most students were aware of capitalization rules, their application of them remained inconsistent. Students admitted during interviews that they did not always remember to use capital letters while writing.

These findings align with the analysis of the students' compositions, which showed that capitalization errors were the most dominant type of mistake. Additionally, the teacher noted that such errors occurred frequently, with incorrect capitalization in the middle of sentences still being observed. This indicates that the students' understanding of capitalization rules has not yet fully translated into the ability to apply them in writing activities. According to the **Enhanced Indonesian Spelling System, 5th Edition** (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2022), capitalization rules dictate that capital letters must be used for the first letter of personal names, place names, and months, as well as at the beginning of a sentence.



Word Writing

Based on the analysis of fourth-grade students' narrative essays, various forms of word writing were observed—some adhering to Indonesian spelling rules and others not. The analysis of word writing in this study covered five indicators: base words, affixed words, word division, prepositions, and numerals/numbers. Errors involving base words were the most prevalent in this category, appearing in the majority of the students' essays. Non-standard forms of base words were still found, often influenced by everyday pronunciation. Regarding affixed words, some students incorrectly separated the affix from the base word. Meanwhile, regarding word division, some students demonstrated reasonable proficiency, although there were still instances of incorrect syllable separation. In the writing of numerals and numbers, non-standard forms were observed, such as using the digit "2" to indicate word repetition (e.g., *jalan2* or *teman2*).

These findings indicate that some students carry informal language habits into their writing. Issues were also noted in the writing of prepositions and affixed words; forms such as *kekolam*, *kedalam*, *kerumah*, *disana*, and *disitu* demonstrate that students struggle to distinguish between prepositions and affixes. According to the Enhanced Indonesian Spelling System (EYD), 5th Edition, a preposition is a word that connects words or phrases within a sentence. Prepositions such as *di*, *ke*, and *dari* must be written separately from the words that follow them (Language Development and Cultivation Agency, 2022). This indicates a need to strengthen students' understanding of preposition usage.

Punctuation Usage

Based on the analysis of fourth-grade students' narrative essays, various instances of punctuation usage were observed—some adhering to Indonesian spelling rules and others not. The analysis of punctuation usage in this study covers five indicators: periods, commas, hyphens, question marks, and exclamation points. Regarding

punctuation, the most prominent errors involve the use of periods and commas, as students do not yet fully grasp their proper placement. This is evident in students' narrative essays, where they frequently omit periods at the end of sentences or place periods where commas should be used. Interview results further indicate that, although most students do use punctuation, their understanding of its application remains suboptimal. Students admitted to being confused about comma usage, and some even failed to use punctuation altogether. These findings align with the analysis of the students' essays, which reveals that the use of periods and commas remains incorrect and tends to be inconsistent.

The teacher also emphasized that errors in punctuation usage are among the most frequent mistakes found in students' writing or compositions. According to the Enhanced Indonesian Spelling System (EYD), 5th Edition, a period is used at the end of a declarative sentence, whereas a comma is used to separate items in a list (words, phrases, or numbers), before conjunctions such as *tetapi* (but), *melainkan* (but rather), and *sedangkan* (whereas) in contrastive compound sentences, and to separate a subordinate clause that precedes a main clause (Language Development and Cultivation Agency, 2022).

Use of Loanwords

Regarding the use of loanwords, not all students employed them in their narrative compositions; consequently, the number of errors found in this aspect was relatively low. The errors that did occur were generally caused by the influence of spoken language carrying over into written form. Errors such as *eskrim* and *maghrib* indicate that students wrote words based on pronunciation rather than the standard form adapted to the Indonesian spelling system. According to the Enhanced Indonesian Spelling System (EYD), 5th Edition, loanwords must adhere to applicable spelling adaptation rules (Language Development and Cultivation Agency, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Generally, students are able to write letters and words legibly; however, inaccuracies persist regarding the use of capital letters, base words, prepositions, and punctuation marks. Regarding letter usage, the most prevalent errors involve inconsistent capitalization—specifically at the beginning of sentences and in the names of people, places, or geographical locations. In terms of word writing, the most notable errors include omitted letters in base words and the use of non-standard forms (reflecting spoken language). Furthermore, regarding punctuation, errors most frequently occur with the use of periods and commas. These findings indicate that while some students are familiar with basic spelling rules, they are not yet able to apply them consistently within the context of complete narrative writing. Therefore, spelling proficiency requires reinforcement through instruction that is more contextual and continuous.

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