

## ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING FOLKLORE

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### ABSTRAK

Kemampuan menulis teks naratif dalam bahasa Inggris masih menjadi tantangan bagi banyak siswa SMA. Cerita rakyat dipilih sebagai media pembelajaran karena mengandung unsur budaya dan struktur naratif yang khas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kesalahan tata bahasa dalam menulis teks cerita rakyat oleh siswa kelas 10E SMA Negeri 1 Sukodadi dan mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan kesulitan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Data diperoleh melalui tes tertulis dan wawancara terstruktur. Dari 30 siswa, dianalisis 20 tulisan yang memenuhi kriteria, terdiri dari 10 tulisan panjang (lebih dari dua kalimat) dan 10 tulisan pendek (kurang dari dua kalimat). Analisis data dilakukan dengan mengidentifikasi, mengelompokkan, dan menafsirkan kesalahan berdasarkan taksonomi strategi permukaan Dulay, Burt, dan Krashen (1982), yang meliputi penghilangan, penambahan, kesalahan pembentukan, dan kesalahan penataan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesalahan yang paling dominan adalah misformation (57,43%), diikuti oleh omission (25,68%), serta addition (8,78%) dan misordering sebesar (8,11%). Kesulitan-kesulitan yang dihadapi siswa antara lain keterbatasan tata bahasa dan kosakata, pengaruh bahasa ibu, kurangnya pemahaman struktur naratif, serta rendahnya rasa percaya diri dan keterampilan revisi.

**Kata Kunci:** teks naratif; menulis cerita rakyat; kesalahan tata Bahasa

### ABSTRACT

The ability to write narrative texts in English is still a challenge for many high school students. Folklore is chosen as a learning medium because it contains cultural elements and a distinctive narrative structure. This study aims to analyze grammatical errors in writing folklore texts by class 10E students of SMA Negeri 1 Sukodadi and identify the factors that cause difficulties. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were obtained through written tests and structured interviews. Of the 30 students, 20 writings that met the criteria were analyzed, consisting of 10 long writings (more than two sentences) and 10 short writings (less than two sentences). Data analysis was carried out by identifying, grouping, and interpreting errors based on the surface strategy taxonomy of Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), which includes omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The results showed that the most dominant error was misformation (57,43%), followed by omission (25,68%), addition (8,78%) and misordering each at (8,11%). Difficulties faced students include limitations in grammar and vocabulary, the influence of the mother tongue, lack of understanding of narrative structure, and low self-confidence and revision skills.

**Key Word :** narrative text; writing folklore; grammatical errors

### INTRODUCTION

Language plays a crucial role in human life. It functions not only as a means of communication but also as a medium to express thoughts, emotions, and build social relationships. Moreover, language is the primary tool in the process of education and dissemination of knowledge (Syakur et al., 2020). Among the various languages in the world, English has gained recognition as a global language due to its wide usage in diverse aspects of life, including education, economy, and technology.

In Indonesia, English is positioned as a foreign language that must be taught to students from primary to tertiary education. English proficiency provides a competitive advantage in a global world where many multinational companies seek employees who can communicate in this language. (Gulo et al., 2022). The Indonesian government includes

English in the national curriculum as a compulsory subject to equip young generations with the ability to communicate globally (Syakur et al., 2020). However, mastering English remains a challenge for many students, particularly in productive skills such as writing. This difficulty arises from several factors, including the lack of an English-speaking environment, limited contextual exposure, and significant differences between English and the students' native language structures.

Writing is one of the productive language skills and is considered the most complex. In writing, students must not only understand proper sentence structures but also organize and express ideas logically and coherently (Wau, 2022), (Emmaryana, 2010). Writing also demands critical and creative thinking, as well as the ability to choose the right diction to ensure that the intended message is clearly conveyed (Wau, 2022). The writing process

involves several systematic stages such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Islam & Mufidah, 2022). However, many students struggle with this process, especially when required to write in a foreign language like English.

In English language teaching, various text types are introduced to students, such as recounts, narratives, descriptions, procedures, and expositions. One significant genre to be taught is narrative text, which aims to tell stories or past experiences in chronological order. Narrative texts typically consist of three main elements: *orientation*, *complication*, and *resolution* (Nursyam, 2021); Dody & Sugeng, 2008). Through narrative writing, students not only learn to produce coherent texts but also practice using appropriate grammatical structures, particularly past tense forms.

In this regard, folklore emerges as a relevant and culturally rich sub-genre of narrative texts. Folklore refers to traditional stories passed down orally through generations and contains cultural values and moral lessons. (Iswara, 2019). Utilizing folklore in English learning can enrich students' writing abilities while also preserving local culture (Fatmawaty et al., 2022). Furthermore, folklore inherently follows a clear narrative structure, making it a suitable object of study for analyzing grammar use in English narrative writing (Luthfiyati et al., 2023).

However, writing folklore in English presents several challenges, especially in the area of grammar. Many students lack a thorough understanding of English grammatical rules, such as verb forms, word order, article usage, and sentence structure (Castillo-Cuesta, 2020). According to (Bronner, n.d.), grammar is "the language for learning language," meaning that through grammar, students are better able to communicate clearly and effectively. Without a strong foundation in grammar, it becomes difficult for learners to construct well-formed sentences in a second language.

To better understand the types of grammatical errors students make in their writing, a systematic analytical approach is necessary. One widely used approach is the Surface Strategy Taxonomy, introduced by Dulay (Dulay et al 1982.) This taxonomy classifies errors based on their forms into four major categories: *omission* (the absence of necessary elements), *addition* (the presence of unnecessary elements), *misformation* (the use of incorrect forms), and *misordering* (the incorrect arrangement of sentence elements).

In addition to identifying errors, it is also important to explore the underlying causes of

students' writing difficulties. According to Brown (Brown, 2000.), there are five primary factors contributing to difficulties in English writing: limited grammar and vocabulary, poor understanding of text structure, first language interference, lack of revision and editing skills, and psychological factors such as low motivation and confidence. These factors are interconnected and significantly affect students' ability to write effectively in English.

This research is grounded in the writer's direct experience during her teaching practicum at SMA Negeri 1 Sukodadi, particularly in class 10E. Observations indicated that many students faced challenges in writing English narrative texts, especially in applying correct grammatical structures. Analyzing errors in writing is the act of identifying, interpreting, and explaining errors students face. Its purpose is to obtain information about students' difficulties in writing English sentences, (Ma et al., 2022). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the grammatical errors made by students in writing folklore texts, and to identify the factors contributing to these difficulties.

The findings of this study are expected to provide practical insights for improving English writing instruction at the senior high school level, particularly in teaching grammar through culturally relevant narrative writing tasks like folklore.

## METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method aimed at analyzing students' grammatical errors in writing folklore texts and identifying the difficulties they experienced during the writing process. The qualitative approach was chosen to provide a detailed, in-depth, and interpretative description of the types of errors and the contributing factors behind them. According to (Creswell, 2023) qualitative research enables the researcher to explore participants' behaviors, perspectives, and experiences naturally without manipulating the research setting.

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Sukodadi, focusing on tenth-grade students, specifically class X-E. The researcher selected this class based on the school's recommendation and the students' availability during the PLP program. During the preliminary observation in English classes, it was found that students frequently made grammatical mistakes in their writing assignments, particularly when writing narrative texts based on folklore. This observation served as the initial background that motivated the researcher to investigate the phenomenon more deeply.

### Research Subject and Object

The subjects of this study were students from class X-E, totaling 30 students. The object of the study included their written assignments based on the folklore "Tanjung Kodok" and the results of interviews related to their writing experiences and difficulties. Among the 30 students, 20 writing samples were selected for analysis. These were divided into two categories: 10 long texts and 10 short texts. The classification helped the researcher observe whether the length of the writing affected the types or frequency of grammatical errors. Additionally, 10 students were selected for structured interviews to explore their individual perceptions and obstacles in writing. Five of them were chosen from those who produced long texts, and five from those who wrote short ones. The selection was based on writing performance and content variation.

### Data Collection Techniques

To obtain valid and reliable data, three main techniques were used: Writing Task: Students were instructed to write a narrative text based on the folklore "Tanjung Kodok" within a 45-minute session. This writing task served as the primary data source for identifying grammatical errors. The instructions emphasized creativity and the use of past tense, which is typical for narrative texts.

Structured Interviews: Ten selected students participated in interviews to gather more comprehensive data about their writing difficulties. The interviews were conducted through WhatsApp chat to ensure flexibility and comfort for the students. The interview guide was prepared in advance and consisted of questions focusing on grammar use, vocabulary knowledge, structure awareness, mother tongue influence, and motivation. This method was based on Bryman's (2012) recommendation for qualitative interview procedures.

Observation: During the PLP teaching program, implemented for three months from January 15 to March 15, 2024, the researcher also conducted passive observation in the classroom. The goal was to understand the students' behavior, attitude, and responses during English writing activities. Observation notes provided contextual support to the written and interview data.

### Research Instrument

The instruments in this study included a writing assessment rubric, an interview guide, and observation sheets. The writing rubric was used to identify the types of grammatical errors

based on Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) Surface Strategy Taxonomy, which classifies errors into four categories: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. The interview guide contained open-ended questions aligned with the five writing difficulty factors proposed by Brown (2000): grammar and vocabulary mastery, structure awareness, L1 interference, revision skills, and psychological elements like motivation and confidence.

### Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis in this research followed several stages:

- Identification and Coding: Each writing sample was examined to locate and highlight all grammatical errors. Errors were then coded into categories using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy framework.
- Classification and Tabulation: The identified errors were grouped according to their type (e.g., misformation, omission), and their frequency was counted. This helped determine which type of error was most dominant across students.
- Interpretation: The researcher interpreted the patterns and possible causes of the errors based on students' interview responses and classroom observation. This interpretative stage was crucial for connecting the linguistic data (errors) with the psychological and contextual factors influencing them.

### Trustworthiness

The writer uses data validity techniques according to Creswell and Miller (2000) to ensure the validity of the data in this study. These techniques include triangulation (using multiple data sources), member checking (asking for feedback from participants regarding existing findings), audit trail (documenting the research process), and extended time (using a long time).

Triangulation: To increase the credibility of the findings, triangulation was used by comparing three different data sources: writing texts, interview results, and classroom observations. According to Creswell and Miller (2000), triangulation enhances the validity of qualitative research by ensuring that findings are corroborated from multiple perspectives.

### Research Procedure

The research procedure consisted of several stages. First, the researcher conducted classroom observations during PLP to identify the issues faced by students in writing. Second, students were given the writing task under supervision. After collecting the writing

products, the researcher selected 20 samples to be analyzed for grammatical errors. Third, interviews were conducted with 10 selected students. Finally, all data were analyzed using qualitative techniques to draw meaningful conclusions regarding error types and writing difficulties. This research was conducted on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 at SMA Negeri 1 Sukodadi, specifically for class X-E students.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to analyze the grammatical errors committed by tenth-grade students of SMA Negeri 1 Sukodadi in writing a folklore text entitled "Tanjung Kodok" in English. The analysis is framed using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), which categorizes errors into four types: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. In addition to grammatical error analysis, this study also investigates the difficulties experienced by students in the writing process based on Brown's (2000) five categories of writing challenges: grammar and vocabulary, organization of ideas, influence of first language, revision and editing ability, and psychological aspects including motivation and confidence. By combining these two perspectives, the study seeks to provide a holistic understanding of both surface-level language issues and the deeper cognitive and affective factors that affect students' writing performance.

The findings from students' written texts reveal that misformation errors dominate the error types with a percentage of 57.43%. These include the use of incorrect verb forms, for instance using "goed" instead of "went," or using "drinked" instead of "drank." This suggests that many students lack mastery over irregular verbs, and that their understanding of past tense rules is incomplete. They often overgeneralize regular patterns, assuming that adding -ed to any verb creates the past tense form. This phenomenon is a common developmental pattern in second language acquisition, but its persistence at the high school level may reflect a lack of reinforcement or feedback in prior instruction.

The second most frequent error was omission (25.68%). In this category, students tended to omit important grammatical components such as auxiliary verbs, articles, or prepositions. For example, a sentence like "The prince go to mountain" omits the article "the" before "mountain" and the auxiliary "does" for proper question formation. Such omissions could stem from the influence of the students' first language, Bahasa Indonesia, which does

not use articles and auxiliary verbs in the same way English does. Moreover, the omission errors often affected clarity and sometimes rendered the sentences ungrammatical in English.

Addition errors accounted for 8.78% of the total. These included adding unnecessary elements, such as saying "He did went" or "the my sister," which reflect confusion over auxiliary verb usage or possessive structures. These mistakes often result from overcorrection or an attempt to sound "more English," where students mistakenly apply multiple grammatical features at once without understanding their interdependence.

Misordering was the least common type of error (8.11%). Examples include "She beautiful is" or "He very angry is," which reflect incorrect syntax that may also be influenced by the students' native language. In Bahasa Indonesia, word order is often more flexible, and students may be directly translating ideas without adapting to English sentence structure rules. Misordering is particularly problematic because it can make the sentence difficult to understand even if all the necessary components are present.

To clarify the findings described, the following table summarizes the types of grammatical errors found in students' writing. This table details each category of error encountered by each student, according to the Surface Strategy Taxonomy classification by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen. This presentation allows readers to see the tendencies of the most frequently occurring error types as well as interindividual variations in the use of grammatical structures.

Tabel 1 Results of Grammatical Error Analysis in Students' Narrative Texts

No.	Type of error				Students' Narrative Text
	Om	Ad	Mf	Mo	
S1	✓		✓	✓	tanjung kodok story
	✓		✓		come's from Lamongan East Java,
			✓		telling a stories
			✓		from a populer place " Tanjung Kodok ".
			✓		once upon a
			✓		time a young man called jaka
			✓		live at the side of the beach.
			✓		jaka is a smart and handsome person but he

[illegible]



	✓	✓			<b>alive</b> a young man, <b>he is</b> name <i>a</i> jaka. <i>he is</i> a { young man <u>the</u> smart }, however he <i>have</i> greedy <i>arakter</i> . a certain moment jaka <i>wish go to</i> a village.
	✓	✓			
	✓	✓			
			✓		
S8	✓	✓	✓	✓	once upon a time, in a village <b>in beach</b> , lived a young man named jaka. he is a { young man handsome } and <i>deligent</i> , but <u>in</u> one day he <i>knowing</i> a castle.
	✓		✓		
			✓		
S9	✓		✓	✓	<b>tanjung kodok is a story from lamongan, east java</b> , and <i>tels</i> a legend about a familiar place <i>with the name</i> tanjung kodok. a long time ago, a young man <i>mamed</i> jak.
			✓		
			✓		
S10	✓	✓	✓		tanjung kodok <i>is</i> a <i>stoory</i> from lamongan, east java and <i>tell</i> a legend <u>recount</u> young man called jaka <i>live</i> in a <i>vll dage</i> in <b>beach bans</b> .
	✓		✓		
			✓		
			✓		
			✓		

sentences and consisting of more than two lines. From these writings, it appeared that students tried to convey a more complete narrative by including elements such as main characters, setting, and storyline. However, although the narrative structure was more developed, many errors were found in writing, especially in terms of omitting important elements in sentences, such as subjects or to be, which caused sentences to be incomplete or difficult to understand. This type of error most often appeared in the opening sentence or introduction of characters and settings, where students often immediately wrote "once upon a time" or "people story Tanjung Kodok" without a clear subject and predicate. In addition to omitting, errors in adding unnecessary elements were also often found, such as the use of excessive conjunctions or adverbs that were not in context. This usually occurred when students tried to expand the story, but because they did not understand the sentence structure in English, it actually made their writing confusing. Errors in word form or structure were also very dominant, especially in the use of inconsistent past tense, for example, "Jaka knew a castle" which should have been "Jaka knew a castle." This type of error was commonly found when students described events or actions taken by characters in the story.

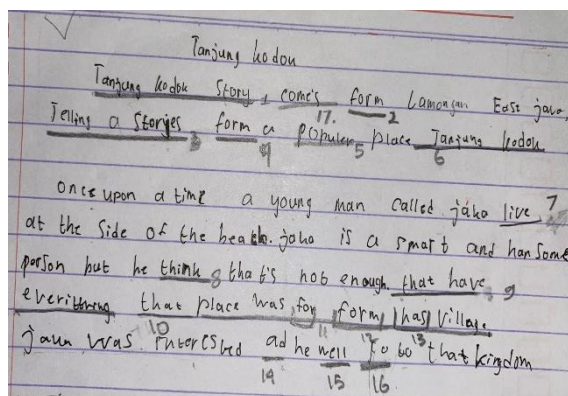
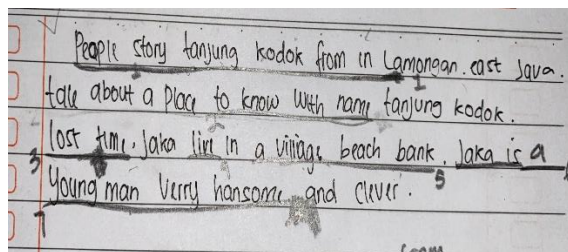
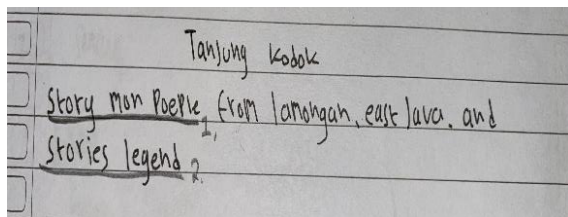
Misordering of words that did not follow English rules also occurred quite often, for example, in phrases such as "youngman handsome" which did not follow the correct order of adjectives and nouns. This misordering was often seen in the character description section, where students tried to convey Jaka's nature or appearance but had not fully mastered the order of adjectives in English. Overall, although many types of errors were found, this group of writings showed students' efforts to convey the story more completely, and with improvements in structure and a better understanding of grammar, their writing had the potential to become a more cohesive and interesting narrative.

Tabel 2 The Recapitulation of the Students' Error

The table contained the results of narrative writing from ten students who created folklore texts with a length of more than two

Number of Student	Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering	Total of Errors
S 1	2	-	16	1	19
S 2	2	-	22	-	24
S 3	2	-	5	-	7
S 4	4	1	5	1	11
S 5	4	1	5	1	11
S 6	2	2	2	2	8
S 7	4	1	5	1	11

S 8	2	1	4	1	8
S 9	1	-	3	1	5
S 10	2	1	5	-	8
S 11	1	-	5	-	6
S 12	1	1	2	-	4
S 13	2	2	2	1	7
S 14	2	-	-	-	2
S 15	1	-	-	1	2
S 16	2	1	1	-	4
S 17	2	1	1	-	4
S 18	-	1	2	1	4
S 19	1	-	-	1	2
S 20	1	-	-	-	1
Total of Errors	38	13	85	12	148



Picture 1. The image above shows three students' writing results in writing folklore.

In addition to written text analysis, interviews were conducted with selected students to identify the difficulties they face in English writing. According to Brown's framework, the first challenge is grammar and vocabulary. Students reported struggling to recall the correct verb forms or the English words needed to express their ideas. This was evident in their overreliance on limited vocabulary, frequent word repetition, and frequent use of inaccurate verb tenses. Many students admitted they rely on Google

Translate or guess words without checking their meanings.

The second difficulty pertains to the organization of ideas. Some students found it hard to begin their writing or to arrange the story in a logical sequence. They tended to describe a sequence of events without clear temporal or causal connections. When asked, some students explained they had never been taught to outline or plan before writing. Others said they simply "wrote whatever came to mind." This lack of planning can lead to incoherent texts, even if the grammar is accurate. This points to a gap in instruction where writing is often treated as a product rather than a process.

Third, many students' writing was influenced by the structures of their native language. The influence of Bahasa Indonesia could be observed not only in misordering and omission but also in the use of expressions that are unnatural or confusing in English. For instance, a phrase like "He have spirit big" reflects Indonesian sentence structure ("Dia punya semangat besar"), where the adjective follows the noun. This indicates that students often think in Indonesian first and then translate directly, rather than constructing their ideas directly in English.

Fourth, students expressed that they seldom revise their work. Most submitted their first drafts as final versions. Reasons included lack of time, lack of knowledge on how to revise, and the assumption that revision is the teacher's responsibility. As a result, many preventable errors persisted. When asked whether they check grammar or spelling before submission, most responded negatively, citing either time constraints or a lack of confidence in their own ability to identify mistakes. This highlights the need for structured writing activities that emphasize multiple drafts and incorporate peer or self-assessment.

Finally, psychological factors played a significant role in the students' writing performance. Many expressed a fear of making

mistakes, embarrassment over poor grammar, or general anxiety about writing in English. This fear often led them to keep their sentences short and simple, which limited their expression. Some admitted to avoiding writing altogether unless required. One student said, "Saya takut salah dan nanti ditertawakan." This quote underscores the need for an emotionally supportive classroom environment where students feel safe to express themselves and make mistakes as part of the learning process.

These findings highlight the need for a multi-pronged approach to improve students' English writing ability. Teachers should not only focus on grammar correction but also teach students how to organize ideas, encourage writing as a process involving drafting and revision, and provide emotional support. Classroom strategies may include structured peer review, graphic organizers for story planning, revision checklists, and confidence-building activities. It is also important to expose students to more English input through reading, listening, and writing activities so that they can internalize natural language patterns.

Beyond these findings, further comparisons between students with different error frequencies offer additional insights. For instance, Student 7 made more misformation errors related to verb forms, whereas Student 15 struggled more with omission, particularly articles and linking verbs. This contrast suggests varied levels of exposure and learning preferences. It becomes evident that certain students may benefit more from visual aids and grammar drills, while others might improve through context-rich activities like storytelling or drama.

Moreover, the presence of misformation and addition errors often coincided in several students' work. This correlation may be linked to confusion between auxiliary use and tense formation. Students who wrote sentences such as "He did went" or "She is cried" seemed to overapply grammatical rules, possibly due to mixed instruction between present continuous and simple past tenses. Teachers should, therefore, ensure that learners clearly distinguish between these tenses, perhaps through contrastive exercises or targeted mini-lessons.

Interestingly, students with lower anxiety reported slightly fewer overall errors and displayed more willingness to write in longer, more complex sentences. This suggests that affective filters play a powerful role in language production. Supporting Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, this study reaffirms the idea that when learners feel safe, encouraged, and confident, they are more likely to take risks in

language use and succeed in applying learned structures.

In terms of instructional implications, the findings suggest that English writing instruction in similar contexts should adopt a balanced approach—one that incorporates both accuracy-focused exercises and fluency-building activities. For example, grammar instruction should be contextualized within writing tasks rather than taught in isolation. Students could be asked to write narratives after grammar lessons, allowing them to apply newly learned structures meaningfully.

To reinforce narrative structure, teachers can introduce story maps or scaffolding outlines. Encouraging students to brainstorm, draft, and revise their work—rather than immediately submitting first drafts—can gradually cultivate self-editing habits. Peer feedback activities can also be introduced carefully, ensuring that the classroom environment remains respectful and constructive. These strategies align with the process writing approach, which emphasizes writing as a recursive, multi-stage process.

It is also important to recognize the role of digital tools. In some cases, students who used Google Docs or grammar checkers displayed more awareness of errors, even if they did not fully understand the underlying rules. While reliance on technology alone cannot substitute for grammar mastery, integrating these tools into classroom instruction may support awareness and confidence. Teachers should guide students on how to use such tools effectively, not as a crutch, but as a supplement to their learning.

Culturally responsive teaching also plays a vital role in helping students bridge local content with global language forms. In the case of Tanjung Kodok, for example, teachers can provide English-language models of Indonesian folktales, allowing students to observe narrative structure and vocabulary within a familiar context. This can ease students' transition into English writing, as they are already emotionally and culturally connected to the story content.

One additional area related to Brown's framework that deserves further elaboration is the role of feedback and teacher-student interaction in the writing process. Several students mentioned that they rarely received personalized feedback on their writing beyond basic grammatical corrections. This lack of formative, constructive feedback can limit their understanding of how to improve both their accuracy and coherence. According to Brown (2000), effective writing instruction should include feedback that not only points out errors



but also guides students toward revising their content, reorganizing ideas, and developing their voice. Students need modeling and support to recognize that revision is not merely fixing grammar but rethinking structure and clarity.

Furthermore, Brown emphasizes the role of scaffolding in the development of writing competence. Many students indicated they felt unsupported when asked to write independently. They were given tasks without pre-writing discussions, brainstorming activities, or graphic organizers. As a result, they lacked direction and confidence. When support was available—such as examples of similar stories or vocabulary lists—students expressed greater ease in beginning and finishing their texts. This suggests that more structured scaffolding strategies should be integrated into writing instruction, including guided modeling, collaborative drafting, and sequenced planning.

Additionally, Brown highlights the importance of audience awareness, yet this was notably absent in the students' writing. Their stories lacked clarity about who was reading the text, which often resulted in underdeveloped or ambiguous plot points. Teachers should introduce the concept of writing for an audience, helping students consider what background knowledge readers need and how to make narratives more engaging or informative. Peer feedback sessions, where students read and respond to each other's work, can cultivate this awareness.

Based on interviews with 10 students (5 writers of long texts and 5 writers of short texts), five main themes emerged, highlighting the difficulties they faced when writing the English folktale "Tanjung Kodok."

### Difficulty Using the Past Tense

Most students stated that they were still confused about using the past tense of verbs, especially irregular verbs.

*"Sometimes I write 'go' or 'goed' when I should write 'went'." (S1)*

*"I often forget to change verbs to the past tense." (S2)*

Analysis: This indicates a weak understanding of students' understanding of irregular verb patterns and the rules for changing verbs in the past tense. This weakness impacts the consistency of tense use throughout the text.

### Limited Vocabulary

Some students admitted to having difficulty finding the right words, leading them to

repeat the same vocabulary or create simple sentences.

*"My vocabulary is limited, so I often use the same words over and over again." (S1)*

*"My vocabulary is limited, so the story is short." (S2)*

Analysis: Limited vocabulary makes it difficult for students to express ideas in detail, resulting in less varied and informative texts.

### Influence of Mother Tongue

Some students still use Indonesian word order, for example, placing adjectives after nouns.

*"Sometimes the order is the same as in Indonesian, for example, 'young man handsome.'" (S1)*

Analysis: Negative transfer from the mother tongue affects sentence structure, particularly the order of adjectives and nouns, which differs between Indonesian and English.

### Lack of Revision Habits

The majority of students do not revise or edit after writing.

*"I don't have time to revise, I just hand it in." (S2)*

Analysis: Lack of revision results in grammatical and vocabulary errors not being corrected before submission, resulting in a decline in writing quality.

### Psychological Factors

Some students feel less confident when writing in English.

*"I'm a bit afraid of making mistakes, so I sometimes hesitate to write." (S1)*

Analysis: Affective factors such as anxiety and fear of making mistakes can hinder writing fluency and even influence the courage to use more complex vocabulary or structures.

Finally, Brown also emphasizes the importance of writing fluency, which refers not only to speed but also to the ease of transforming thoughts into language. Many students struggled with this transition. When asked how they felt during the writing process, they often said, *"bingung mau nulis apa"* (confused about what to write). This highlights a need for fluency-building exercises such as timed freewriting, sentence expansion tasks, and creative prompts that encourage students to express ideas without fear of judgment.

In conclusion, the results show that students' grammatical errors in writing are strongly influenced by both linguistic and non-linguistic factors. While Surface Strategy Taxonomy provides a useful framework for identifying and categorizing errors, a deeper understanding emerges when these patterns are connected to the broader challenges students face in the writing process. Addressing grammatical errors in isolation is insufficient. Instead, educators must consider the cognitive, linguistic, instructional, and emotional factors that shape students' performance. With targeted instruction, scaffolded practice, process-based writing approaches, and affective support, students can improve both their accuracy and fluency in writing. Future research may benefit from longitudinal studies that track writing development over time, or experimental studies that evaluate the effectiveness of integrated instructional strategies in reducing errors and improving writing quality.

## CONCLUSION

This study shows that the most dominant grammatical errors in the writing of the folktale "Tanjung Kodok" by tenth-grade students were misformations (57.43%), followed by omissions (25.68%), additions (8.78%), and misorderings (8.11%). These errors generally relate to inconsistent use of the past tense, incorrect verb forms, the addition of unnecessary elements, and incorrect word order.

Qualitative findings from student interviews support the results of the quantitative analysis, which identified five main factors causing errors: (1) poor mastery of both regular and irregular past tense forms; (2) limited vocabulary, which hinders the expression of varied ideas; (3) the negative influence of the mother tongue, which affects sentence structure and word order; (4) a lack of habit of revising or editing after writing; and (5) psychological factors such as fear of making mistakes and low self-confidence in writing in English.

Based on these findings, this study emphasizes the importance of implementing an integrated approach to writing. This approach includes strengthening grammatical competence, particularly in the use of the past tense; Enriching vocabulary relevant to the narrative text genre; familiarizing students with revising and editing manuscripts; and developing student self-confidence through positive feedback and ongoing writing practice. Implementing this strategy is expected to improve students' accuracy and fluency in

writing narrative texts in English, while minimizing grammatical errors in the future.

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