



Error Analysis of Sentence-Writing in 3RD Grade Elementary School at SDN Gedanganak 3

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the types of errors commonly found in the English writing of third-grade students at SDN Gedanganak 3. The analysis focuses on four key aspects of writing mechanics: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. The data were obtained from a written test involving sentence-writing tasks, and each error was categorized and calculated based on its frequency. The results revealed that the most frequent errors occurred in the punctuation aspect (48.95%), followed by grammar (46.84%), capitalization (41.05%), and spelling (33.68%). These findings indicate that students still face challenges in constructing simple English sentences, particularly in applying writing mechanics accurately. Therefore, English writing instruction should emphasize balanced and focused practice across all mechanical aspects to support students' overall writing development.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, English is categorized as a foreign language. A foreign language refers to a language that is not used as a common means of communication in the country where it is taught. The status of English as a foreign language is one factor contributing to the relatively low English proficiency level among Indonesians. As reported by the 2023 EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI), Indonesia holds the 79th position among 113 countries, indicating that the population's English proficiency is still relatively low. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, a renowned German philosopher, once asserted that "those who don't know anything about a foreign language, they don't know anything about their own language." This statement emphasizes that learning English is very important in modern society. English should be taught from an early age, not only to adults or teenagers but also to young children.

According to Brown (2007) In his book "Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy", states language learning involves the integration of four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which should not be taught separately. Writing plays a significant role and is widely used in academic situations. Considering that English is known as a foreign language, obstacles in writing English are still often found in elementary school students. One of them is limited vocabulary, students are not used to using English as a daily language so they don't have much vocabulary, writing errors also often occur where students often omit or reduce letters in the word, for example: fren (*friend*), becus (*because*), swiming (*swimming*). The incorrect use of capital letters, punctuation and grammar is a common issue in English writing. For example, students may write "*im live in jakarta*" instead of "*I live in Jakarta*".

Several previous studies have analyzed writing errors in English with various focuses. Mustadi & Amalia (2020) found that students often made spelling errors and mistakes in capitalization, punctuation, and affixes, mostly caused by limited time and lack of accuracy. Akmalia et al. (2022) revealed that students faced errors from both intralingual and interlingual transfer due to limited vocabulary and low confidence. Similarly, Nisak et al. (2023) discovered that spelling was the most frequent error (55%) among elementary students, followed by grammar and letter formation. Salsabillah et al. (2024) highlighted intralingual errors such as incomplete application of rules, and interlingual errors like literal translation. Winarta (2016) focused on lexical errors, especially morphological mistakes, influenced by both mother tongue interference and rule overgeneralization. Hardiany & Budiati (2023) analyzed syntactic errors in high school students, with omission and addition errors being the most common. Meanwhile, Pratama & Dewi (2022) reported translation errors in vocabulary, punctuation, and sentence structure among literature students. From these studies, it can be concluded that English writing errors occur across different education levels, with spelling, grammar, syntax, and lexical errors being the most frequent.

Based on this issue, this study aims to analyze sentence-writing errors made by third-grade elementary school students, focusing on writing mechanics such as capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar. According to Tompkins (2011), writing mechanics are essential for helping young learners convey meaning clearly and accurately, as mastery of these conventions supports overall writing development. Therefore, the findings of this study are expected to provide pedagogical benefits for teachers in improving writing instruction, theoretical contributions to the study of error analysis in young learners, and practical implications for helping students become more accurate and aware in writing simple English sentences.

METHOD

This study applies Error Analysis (EA) as the main method because it provides a systematic way to identify, classify, and analyze students' errors in learning English. Error analysis is a branch of applied linguistics that studies the errors students make when learning a second or foreign language. The goal of this analysis is to identify the most common types of errors, identify their causes, and understand how students learn the language. To identify language errors, there are two main approaches used, namely Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Error Analysis (EA). In the 1950s, the method used was Contrastive Analysis. Contrastive Analysis is a method used to compare the structure of a first language (L1) and a second or foreign language (L2) in order to predict difficulties caused by language structure. According to Karim & Nassaji (2013) "L1 transfer can be facilitative or interfering depending on the typological distance between L1 and L2." If the L1 and L2 structures are similar then students will understand it more easily (positive transfer). CA only focuses on language differences (L1 and L2). Meanwhile, Stephen Pit Corder emphasized that not all errors arise due to differences in L1 and L2, errors can arise due to students not fully understanding the rules of the second language (L2). This criticism of CA encouraged the emergence of Error Analysis (EA) which was introduced by Corder. Corder began to introduce Error Analysis (EA) in the late 1960s with his paper entitled "*The Significance of Learners Errors*". Therefore, Corder emphasizes the importance of analyzing actual errors that occur during the learning process, rather than relying solely on cross-linguistic comparisons. It can be concluded that EA not only focuses on predicting errors, but also analyzes sources, patterns that occur in language learning. In short Error Analysis focuses on real errors that occur during the learning process.

According to, Doughty and Long (2003) stated that through error analysis, teachers can understand how students construct their understanding of the target language and how their language system develops. By understanding how students process language, teachers can identify common error patterns. This allows learning to be more focused and effective, because teachers can adapt appropriate teaching strategies according to student needs. Hughes (2002)

further emphasized that error analysis also contributes to the development of students' skills. Awareness of mistakes made will help students improve their language skills. By giving students the opportunity to learn from their own mistakes, students' self-confidence will develop so that students are not afraid of making mistakes in language so that their language skills will gradually improve. Therefore, error analysis is not only useful for improving language skills, but also for building students' self-confidence and motivation in learning a foreign language.

This study employed a quantitative approach using the Error Analysis (EA) method to examine students' language errors in learning English. Data were collected from the results of third grade students' assignments at Gedanganak 3 Elementary School through one data collection in the form of a written evaluation. The subjects in this study were all third-grade students at SD N Gedanganak 3. The number of students who were the subjects of the study were 25 people. The selection of these objects was based on the consideration that students in third grade have already acquired a basic understanding of English, but are still prone to making various types of errors in using the language.

The instrument used in this study was a sentence writing test consisting of 10 items. Students' answers were analyzed based on four categories of errors: spelling error (SE), punctuation error (PE), capitalization error (CE), and grammar error (GE). A scoring table was used to calculate the total number of correct answers and errors made by each student. The percentage of correct answers and errors was then obtained using the following formulas:
 Percentage of Correct Answers = $(\text{Total Correct Answers} / \text{Number of Students} \times 10) \times 100\%$
 Percentage of Errors = $(\text{Total Errors} / \text{Number of Students} \times 10) \times 100\%$.

Table 1. Research Instrument

No	Name	SE	PE	CE	GE
	Total Correct				
	Total Error				
	$\frac{\text{Total Correct Answers}}{\text{Number of Students} \times 10} \times 100\%$				
	$\frac{\text{Total Error Provide}}{\text{Number of Students} \times 10} \times 100\%$				

To ensure its quality, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability. The results showed that all items were valid ($r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$, $\text{sig} < 0.05$) and reliable (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.897).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The writer selects five main characters from *Fast & Furious Present: Hobbs and Shaw*, which are the most mentioned characters in the movie. The characters are Deckard Shaw, Luke Hobbs, Hattie Shaw, Brixton Lore, and Sefina Hobbs. The data were collected from a written test given to 19 third-grade students at SD N Gedanganak 3. The test contained 10 items focusing on four aspects of writing mechanics: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. Students corrected sentences in written form. The analysis was carried out by calculating the percentage of correct and incorrect answers in each aspect. With 19 students and 10 items, a total of 190 responses per aspect were analyzed.

Table 2. Writing Test Results

No	Name	SE	PE	CE	GE
1	Student 1	3	0	3	0
2	Student 2	0	0	0	0
3	Student 3	9	9	10	5
4	Student 4	5	7	5	3
5	Student 5	10	5	1	8
6	Student 6	4	5	9	3
7	Student 7	10	6	10	9
8	Student 8	8	9	4	10
9	Student 9	10	4	10	10
10	Student 10	7	10	10	9
11	Student 11	8	0	1	5
12	Student 12	6	9	4	2
13	Student 13	5	0	0	6
14	Student 14	7	5	1	2
15	Student 15	7	10	10	9
16	Student 16	5	4	5	5
17	Student 17	9	1	9	1
18	Student 18	9	10	10	9
19	Student 19	4	3	10	5

Total Correct Answers	126	97	112	101
Total Error	64	93	78	89
$\frac{\text{Total Correct Answers}}{\text{Number of Students} \times 10} \times 100\%$	66,32%	51,05%	58,95%	53,16%
$\frac{\text{Total Error}}{\text{Number of Students} \times 10} \times 100\%$	33,68%	48,95%	41,05%	46,84%

Based on the results of a written test conducted on third-grade students of SDN Gedanganak 3, the data obtained showed that students still experience various difficulties in writing simple sentences in English, especially in the aspect of writing mechanics. The highest error rate was in the Punctuation aspect (48.95%), followed by Grammar (46.84%), Capitalization (41.05%), and Spelling (33.68%).

1. Spelling Errors

In the spelling aspect, the correct answer rate reached 66.32%, indicating that most students were able to write simple vocabulary quite well. This is likely because previous learning emphasized more oral and written vocabulary recognition. For example, students were able to write words like "library" and "class" correctly because they frequently heard them in their daily activities.

2. Punctuation Errors

The Punctuation aspect showed the highest error rate, namely 48.95%. In this case, the application of punctuation, commas, and question marks was still not applied consistently by students. Many of them do not understand statements and questions, such as adding a question mark to a declarative sentence, for example "*he is in the library?*". In addition, there are also

many errors in the placement of comma punctuation, for example "*This is a classroom, a library and, a toilet.*" which should be "*This is a classroom, a library, and a toilet.*"

3. Capitalization Errors

The Capitalization aspect had an error rate of 41.05%. These errors relate to the use of capital letters at the beginning of sentences and also to the use of people's names, which students often overlook.

4. Grammar Errors

Grammar errors were also quite high, at 46.84%. These errors were primarily seen in the use of auxiliary verbs such as *is, am, and are*, which did not correspond to the subject. For example, students often wrote "*He are in the class*" or "*They is in the library*," reflecting a lack of mastery of the concept of appropriate subjects and verbs. Furthermore, confusion between subjects and verbs was common. *he/she/it* with *I/you/they* also becomes the main cause of errors in this aspect of grammar.

5. Most Frequent Errors

The most frequent type of error found in the students' sentence writing was punctuation, with a total error percentage of 48.95%. Many students struggled to apply correct punctuation rules, particularly in using periods (.), commas (,), and question marks (?). These errors often led to unclear sentence boundaries or confusing sentence meanings. This indicates a lack of understanding of basic writing conventions in English and suggests that punctuation is an area that requires greater instructional emphasis at the elementary level.

In line with this topic, a number of studies showed that English language errors still occurred at various levels of education. Mutadi & Amalia (2020) in their research stated that spelling and punctuation errors were the most common types of errors. Nisak et.al (2023) in their research also found that spelling errors were the most dominant errors in grade IV elementary school students with a percentage of 55%. Lexical errors that included the use of tense, word order, interrogative forms, verb forms, adjective forms and morpheme-bound errors such as the use of verbs + -ing also still occurred in grade V elementary school students in the research of Gde & Winarta (2016). Meanwhile, Akmalia et.al (2022) stated that elementary school students are weak in mastering vocabulary and structure, because many students still applied the rules of their mother tongue to English. At a higher level of education, Hardiany & Budiati (2023) conducted a study of syntactic errors in vocational high school students, which found that students still made errors in sentence structure, such as subject-predicate errors, verb usage, and compound sentence construction. These findings indicate that problems in English writing occur not only at the elementary level but also continue into the secondary level. this study analysed 4 aspects of linguistic errors, namely Spelling, punctuation, Capitalization, and Grammar, and highlighted changes in error levels through pre-tests and post-tests. So that in this study a shift in error patterns can be seen, where Grammar, which was initially dominant, decreased, while errors in punctuation increased. This shows that focusing on learning one aspect can cause other aspects to be neglected, thus requiring balanced and comprehensive learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the current research, it can be concluded that Error Analysis is an effective approach to identify and understand the types of linguistic errors in students' English writing. The findings revealed that third-grade students at SDN Gedanganak 3 still faced challenges in constructing simple English sentences, particularly in four writing mechanics

aspects: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and grammar. Among these aspects, punctuation showed the highest percentage of errors at 48.95%, followed by grammar (46.84%), spelling (41.05%), and capitalization (33.68%). These results indicate that students require more focused instruction and practice in writing mechanics to improve their overall sentence-writing accuracy.

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