

DEMYSTIFYING STUDENTS' WRITING ERRORS IN DESCRIPTIVE TEXT AFTER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THINK-TALK-WRITE (TTW) STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify the types and frequencies of writing errors in students' descriptive texts produced after the implementation of the Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy in a rural senior high school. Writing is still a difficult productive skill for Indonesian learners of English, and error analysis studies are generally carried out without being linked to a particular teaching strategy, so it is not yet clear which error types remain dominant once a strategy such as TTW has been applied. This research used a qualitative descriptive case study design. The data were collected through a semi-structured interview with the English teacher and the analysis of twenty two descriptive texts produced by tenth grade students across two TTW sessions. The errors were classified using Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) surface strategy taxonomy. From forty two identified errors, omission was the most dominant type at 54.8 percent, followed by misinformation and addition at 16.7 percent each, and misordering at 11.9 percent. The dominance of omission, especially the missing copula to be, is interpreted as first language interference. The study also found a gap between the teacher's perception and the actual error pattern in the students' texts. These findings provide a contextual reference for teaching descriptive writing in rural schools.

Keywords: think-talk-write strategy, writing errors, descriptive text, rural school

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis dan frekuensi kesalahan menulis pada teks deskriptif siswa yang dihasilkan setelah implementasi strategi Think-Talk-Write (TTW) di sebuah sekolah menengah atas pedesaan. Menulis masih menjadi keterampilan produktif yang sulit bagi pembelajar bahasa Inggris di Indonesia, dan penelitian analisis kesalahan umumnya dilakukan tanpa dikaitkan dengan strategi pengajaran tertentu, sehingga belum jelas jenis kesalahan apa yang masih dominan setelah sebuah strategi seperti TTW diterapkan. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain studi kasus deskriptif kualitatif. Data dikumpulkan melalui

wawancara semi terstruktur dengan guru bahasa Inggris dan analisis dua puluh dua teks deskriptif yang dihasilkan siswa kelas sepuluh dalam dua sesi TTW. Kesalahan diklasifikasikan menggunakan *surface strategy taxonomy* dari Dulay, Burt, dan Krashen (1982). Dari empat puluh dua kesalahan yang teridentifikasi, *omission* menjadi jenis paling dominan sebesar 54,8 persen, diikuti *misformation* dan *addition* masing-masing 16,7 persen, serta *misordering* 11,9 persen. Dominasi *omission*, terutama hilangnya kopula *to be*, ditafsirkan sebagai pengaruh bahasa pertama. Penelitian ini juga menemukan kesenjangan antara persepsi guru dan pola kesalahan yang sebenarnya pada tulisan siswa. Temuan ini memberikan rujukan kontekstual bagi pengajaran menulis teks deskriptif di sekolah pedesaan.

Kata Kunci: *strategi think-talk-write, kesalahan menulis, teks deskriptif, sekolah pedesaan*

A. Introduction

Writing is one of the productive skills that learners of English as a foreign language often find the most difficult to master. To produce a good piece of writing, students have to organize their ideas, choose suitable words, and arrange grammatically correct sentences at the same time (Hyland, 2003). This difficulty becomes even more visible when students are asked to write a descriptive text, since this type of text requires the use of the simple present tense, adjectives, and a coherent structure so that the reader can picture the object being described.

In practice, writing errors in the descriptive texts of Indonesian students still occur frequently. Several error analysis studies have shown that

students often make errors in grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure when they write descriptive texts (Amelia, 2023; Subagiyo & Mas, 2023; Abdurahim, Santoso, & Harsiati, 2024). To understand these errors in a systematic way, the present study uses the *surface strategy taxonomy* of Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), which divides errors into four types, namely *omission*, *addition*, *misformation*, and *misordering*.

One strategy that may help students overcome their writing difficulties is the Think-Talk-Write (TTW) strategy. This strategy divides the writing process into three phases, namely thinking individually in the Think phase, discussing collaboratively in the Talk phase, and writing independently in the Write

phase. A number of studies have reported that the TTW strategy can improve students' descriptive writing (Rusfandi, 2019; Sari & Sutopo, 2018; Aprilia, Sipayung, & Purba, 2024; Mohammad & Abdallah, 2023). However, most of these studies emphasized the measurement of effectiveness through writing scores, and only a few have described how the strategy is actually enacted in the classroom.

This gap becomes more evident in rural schools, which have limited resources such as internet access, reference books, and dictionaries. In addition, error analysis studies are generally carried out without being linked to a particular teaching strategy, so it is not yet clear which types of errors remain dominant after the TTW strategy has been applied. This condition is the real problem that underlies the present study.

Based on the description above, this study aims to describe the implementation of the Think-Talk-Write strategy in teaching descriptive writing at a rural senior high school, and to identify the types and frequencies of writing errors in the students' descriptive texts after the strategy was used. The findings are

expected to give English teachers in rural schools a reference for recognizing recurring error patterns and for adapting their teaching strategy to a classroom with limited resources.

B. Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2014). This design was chosen because the study focuses on describing what error patterns appear in the students' descriptive writing within one specific context, rather than testing effectiveness or generalizing the results to a wider population.

The study was conducted at a senior high school located in a rural area. The participants were tenth grade students and the English teacher who taught the class. The data were collected through two techniques, namely a semi-structured interview with the teacher and document analysis of the students' descriptive texts. The written documents were collected from two TTW sessions, namely on 19 May 2026 and 26 May 2026, with a total of twenty two written documents. To protect the identity of the students,

who are minors, each student was given a code from S1 to S12.

The error analysis was carried out by identifying and classifying every error into the four categories of Dulay, Burt, and Krashen's (1982) surface strategy taxonomy. Each error was counted per occurrence, so a repeated deviation was recorded every time it appeared. Pure spelling slips were not counted within the four categories because the taxonomy focuses on grammatical structure. Frequency and percentage were used as descriptive tools to portray the pattern of errors, not to measure a cause and effect relationship. The results of the observation and the interview were then used to interpret the error patterns qualitatively.

C.FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are presented according to the two research questions, namely the implementation of the Think-Talk-Write strategy and the pattern of writing errors in the students' descriptive texts.

The Types and Frequencies of Writing Errors.

The analysis of the twenty two descriptive texts produced a total of forty two errors that fell into the four

categories. The distribution of the errors is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Writing Errors

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Error Type	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Tota	Percentage
Omission	14	9	23	54.8%
Misformation	2	5	7	16.7%
Addition	2	5	7	16.7%
Misordering	4	1	5	11.9%
Total	22	20	42	100%

As shown in Table 1, omission was the most dominant error type at 54.8 percent with twenty three occurrences. Misformation and addition were the second most frequent types at 16.7 percent each, while misordering was the least frequent at 11.9 percent.

The omission errors were mostly the absence of the copula to be, the existential there is or there are, the infinitive marker to, and the plural marker. This can be seen in student sentences such as "the place very clean" and "I'm so happy go to canteen". This pattern may be read as a sign of first language interference, since Indonesian and Sundanese do not require an explicit copula to form a

complete sentence. A sentence such as “tempat favorit saya dekat sekolah” is already considered complete without a verb, so the students appear to have carried this habit into their English writing. This interpretation is supported by the teacher's account in the interview, which stated that the students were not accustomed to using verb changes or the copula.

Another interesting finding emerged from comparing the two data sources, namely a gap between the teacher's perception and the actual error pattern. The teacher felt that misformation was the most common error, yet the students' texts showed that omission appeared far more often. This suggests that a teacher's impression does not always match the pattern that a careful analysis of the writing can reveal. This kind of gap is valuable because it points to a real classroom problem that teachers can recognize.

The misformation errors, although less frequent, still showed a pattern of first language interference, for example in “the zoo is very many animals” and “I likes coffee”. These errors may be related to the way Indonesian verbs do not change according to the subject,

so the students did not yet consistently apply subject-verb agreement in English. This finding is in line with earlier error analysis studies that highlighted grammatical difficulty in descriptive writing (Subagiyo & Mas, 2023; Amelia, 2023; Abdurahim et al., 2024). It should be noted that the distribution of error types may differ across studies because it is affected by the students' proficiency level and the length of their writing, so the pattern found here should not be assumed to be the same in all contexts.

The addition and misordering errors were the least frequent. The addition errors, such as “I Like Is the bedroom”, can be read as an overgeneralization in which the students inserted to be because they had begun to learn that English sentences often contain it but had not yet mastered where it belongs. The misordering errors, such as “Canteen School” and “Field Football”, seem to reflect the difference in word order between the two languages, since English places the modifier before the head noun while Indonesian places it after, as in “taman sekolah” for “school garden”.

The comparison of the data across the two meetings also showed that omission and misordering tended to decrease after the Talk phase, while misinformation was more persistent. Some students even produced texts that were almost free of errors in the second meeting. This indicates that peer discussion helps most with visible errors such as missing elements and word order, but less with form-based errors that involve deeper grammatical rules. This finding complements previous studies that showed the TTW strategy improves writing ability (Rusfandi, 2019; Aprilia et al., 2024), by adding a picture of which error types are more responsive to the strategy and which are more resistant.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that omission was the most dominant error type in the students' descriptive texts produced after the implementation of the Think-Talk-Write strategy, at 54.8 percent, especially the missing copula to be, which is interpreted as first language interference. The study also found a gap between the teacher's perception and the actual error pattern in the students' texts.

Based on these findings, English teachers in rural schools are advised to give explicit and repeated attention to the verb to be, the existential there is and there are, the plural marker, and subject-verb agreement. Future researchers are encouraged to add student interviews for triangulation, to use longer descriptive texts, and to extend the duration and the number of research sites so that the patterns found here can be tested in more varied contexts.

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