

Analysis of Language Errors in The Writing Aspect of Observation Report Texts Students at MTS Pancasila

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the language errors contained in the observation report texts (LHO) of class VII A students of MTS Pancasila Tanjung Beringin and identify the causal factors that improve the quality of writing learning. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods and document analysis. The research data were in the form of 24 observation report texts written by class VII A students. Data analysis includes the identification, categorization, frequency calculation, and analysis of the causes of errors in five linguistic aspects: spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure, and cohesion-coherence. The study found 847 language errors from 24 essays (an average of 35.3 errors per essay). The distribution of errors based on category is: (1) punctuation errors, 287 errors (33.9%); (2) sentence structure errors, 180 errors (21.3%); (3) spelling errors, 156 errors (18.4%); (4) diction errors, 154 errors (18.2%); and (5) cohesion-coherence errors, 70 errors (8.3%). The most dominant type of error was the use of commas (156 errors, 18.4% of the total), followed by subject-predicate mismatch (67 errors, 7.9%) and inappropriate word choice (89 errors, 10.5%). Analysis of the causes of errors revealed that errors were mainly caused by: (1) pedagogical factors (40%), minimal emphasis on learning punctuation and sentence structure; (2) psycholinguistic factors (30%), limited working memory and lack of attention when writing; (3) intralingual error (20%), imperfect mastery of Indonesian language rules; and (4) interlingual error and sociolinguistic factors (10%), the influence of everyday language and regional languages. Grade VII students still experienced a high level of language errors in writing observation report texts, especially in punctuation and sentence structure. This study emphasizes the urgency of improving writing instruction by implementing more effective learning strategies, emphasizing specific linguistic aspects, and providing constructive feedback. The results can serve as a basis for teachers to design targeted remediation programs and improve the overall quality of writing instruction.

Keywords: Writing, Language, Errors

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing skills are a crucial aspect of learning Indonesian at junior high school level. Writing is not simply about expressing ideas but rather a complex process involving various linguistic and cognitive skills. According to Damayanti et al. (2025), writing is the act of creating graphic symbols that produce language that is understandable to a person, allowing others to read those symbols and understand the writer's thoughts and feelings. Therefore, writing instruction at the junior high school level is designed to develop students' ability to express ideas, experiences, and information through structured and effective writing (Damayanti et al., 2025).

In the 2013 curriculum still in effect in Indonesia, the skill of writing Observation Report (LHO) texts is one of the basic competencies that must be mastered by seventh-grade students. LHO texts present information about the results of observations of objects, phenomena, or events in a systematic and structured manner (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). This text has a social function of communicating factual information from observations clearly, accurately, and objectively. The ability to write LHO texts is an important foundation for students to develop scientific and academic writing skills at a higher level of education.

However, the reality on the ground shows that many students still experience difficulties in writing, especially in terms of the linguistic aspect. Language errors that frequently appear in students' writing cover various

aspects, ranging from the mechanical aspects of writing, such as spelling and use of punctuation, to more complex aspects such as diction, sentence structure, and discourse cohesion. Based on the results of a preliminary study conducted at MTS Pancasila Tanjung Beringin, it was found that grade VII A students still made many language errors in their LHO text composition. These errors include the use of spelling that did not conform to Enhanced Spelling (EYD), inappropriate punctuation placement, inappropriate word choice, ambiguous sentence construction, and ineffective use of cohesive devices (Rohma et al., 2025).

Research on language error analysis has been widely conducted. Rahmawati's (2020) research shows that language errors among junior high school students remain a serious problem that requires special attention from educators (Rahmawati, S., & Wijaya, 2023). Furthermore, Nurdiansyah and Sari (2021) found that errors in sentence structure were the most common errors in students' writing, followed by errors in punctuation and spelling (Nurdiansyah, N., & Sari, 2021). Another study by Pratiwi (2022) revealed that factors causing students' language errors stem not only from a lack of mastery of Indonesian language rules but also from the influence of their mother tongue and a lack of intensive writing practice (Prastiwi, 2023).

Understanding the patterns and types of language errors made by students is an important step in designing effective and measurable learning strategies. By analyzing these errors, educators can identify areas that require special emphasis on writing instruction. Therefore, this research should very urgent to be carried out to provide a comprehensive picture of the profile of students' language errors and the factors that cause them, so that it can be used as a basis for improving and increasing the quality of writing learning, especially in writing LHO texts.

II. METHODS

A. Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach using a descriptive method. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982) and Creswell (2012), qualitative research seeks to understand a phenomenon in its own context without providing special treatment or control over research variables. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2009) in Sugiyono (2019), a qualitative approach prioritizes process and meaning over results or output. In this study, a qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to understand the types of language errors, error patterns, and factors causing errors in students' observational report texts (Creswell, J. W., & Clark, 2017)(Sugiyono, 2019).

This descriptive method was chosen because this study aimed to systematically describe and analyze language errors without providing any specific treatment or intervention. According to Sugiyono (2020), the descriptive method is a research method describes phenomena or analysis results, as they are based on collected empirical data. According to Arikunto (2019), the qualitative descriptive method is highly suitable for language error analysis research because it allows researchers to describe the characteristics of errors, their occurrence patterns, and the context of errors in students' writing (Arikunto, 2017).

This type of research involves document analysis. According to Bowen (2009) in Setiawan and Tawarno (2022), document analysis is a research technique that uses documents as the main data source. The documents analyzed in this study were observation report texts written by Class VII A students.

According to Scott and Marshall (2005) in Sugiyono (2020), document analysis is a type of research that emphasizes content analysis and the meaning of text. In the context of this study, document analysis focuses on analyzing the linguistic content of students' essays to identify, classify, and analyze language errors.

According to Yin (2018), document analysis studies have the following advantages: (1) the data are stable and can be re-examined; (2) they do not require direct contact with respondents; (3) they can analyze documents over time to see changes; and (4) the research costs are relatively cheaper. The choice of this type of research is also supported by Katz (2015), who stated that document analysis is very effective for educational research, especially for analyzing learning products such as student essays, written assignments, and student portfolios (Yin, 2018).

B. Data Sources

The subjects of this study were students of class VII A of MTS Pancasila Tanjung Beringin, located in the Tanjung Beringin District, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province. The selection of this school was based on accessibility considerations and availability of adequate research samples. According to Creswell (2012), the selection of research subjects in qualitative research should not be based on statistical criteria, but on purposive sampling or criteria-based selection. In this case, the students of class VII A were selected because: (1) they had studied the text of observational reports according to the curriculum; (2) they had

completed the assignment of writing an essay on the text of observational reports; and (3) they were a population relevant to the focus of the study (Sugiyono, 2019).

3.2.2 Population and Number of Students

The study population consisted of 27 students in class VII A of MTS Pancasila Tanjung Beringin. According to Sugiyono (2020), a population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and conclusions drawn. The total number of students was 27, consisting of 13 males and 14 females. All students in the class had participated in learning to write observational report texts and had completed essay-writing assignments (Sugiyono, 2019). Of the 27 students in class VII A, this study used a sample of 24 essays. Sample selection was performed using purposive sampling. According to Patton (2002) in Sugiyono (2020), purposive sampling is a sampling technique with certain considerations based on research objectives. The sample selection criteria were as follows: (1) essays written by students who were present when the assignment was collected; (2) essays that had a complete observational report text structure (general statement, section description, and conclusion); (3) essays that can be read clearly; and (4) essays written by hand or typed in a clearly identifiable script (Sugiyono, 2019).

Based on these criteria, three essays were excluded from the sample because: (1) two essays did not have complete structures and (2) one essay could not be read clearly because the writing was very illegible. The research sample consisted of 24 essays that met the research criteria.

The object of this research is an observation report written by students in class VII A. These essays are writing assignments given by Indonesian language teachers with the theme of observing certain objects (animals, plants, or objects) and reporting the results in the form of observation report texts.

According to Ary et al. (2010) in Setiawan and Tawarno (2022), the object of research on document analysis is the document itself, which is the focus of the analysis. In this study, the focus of the analysis is (1) the types of language errors found in the essay; (2) the linguistic aspects that are the source of errors (spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure, cohesion-coherence); (3) the pattern and frequency of error occurrence; and (4) factors that may be the cause of errors.

C. Data Collection Techniques

The collection of student essay documents was carried out through coordination with the Indonesian language teacher of Class VII A. The researcher asked the teacher to collect essays that had been written by students as a result of the task of writing an observation report. According to Creswell (2012), document collection in qualitative research involves: (1) identification of relevant documents; (2) access documents; (3) recording important information from documents; and (4) storing documents safely.

In this study, all essays were collected in photocopy or scan forms to ensure that the original data were maintained. Each essay was given an identity in the form of a sample code (S-01, S-02, etc.) to facilitate identification and analysis while maintaining the confidentiality of student identity. The time for data collection was carried out at the end of the observation report text learning period, namely, after students had completed the writing assignment and the teacher had carried out an initial assessment.

Documentation in this research includes: (1) recording basic information about the school, number of students, and learning conditions; (2) photographic or scanned documentation of student essays; and (3) documentation of other supporting information, such as syllabi, lesson plans (RPP), and assigned assignments. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1982) in Sugiyono (2020), documentation is the collection of data in the form of written documents, photographs, or other visual data relevant to the research. Documentation in this research aims to: (1) store physical research data, (2) enable data verification by readers or other researchers, and (3) provide an important context for data interpretation. All documents are neatly stored in digital folders with a clear naming structure to facilitate data access and management during the analysis process.

3.3.3 Interview (If Required)

Although the primary focus of the research is document analysis, interviews may be conducted, if necessary, to supplement or clarify certain information. According to Creswell (2012), interviews in qualitative research can be used to obtain information that cannot be obtained through documents. The interviews in this study will be conducted with: (1) Indonesian language teachers to obtain information about learning conditions, student difficulties, and factors that influence writing learning, and (2) several selected students to obtain information about their writing process, difficulties encountered, and their perceptions of the errors they make. According to Yin (2018), semi-structured interviews are an appropriate technique for document analysis research because they allow researchers to obtain more in-depth information while remaining focused on the research topic. If

interviews are conducted, an interview guide will be developed in advance, with open-ended and neutral questions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Design

This study analyzed the text of observation reports (LHO) written by students of Class VII A MTS Pancasila Tanjung Beringin, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province. The research sample consisted of 24 student essays that met the research criteria, namely essays that had a complete structure (general statement, section description, and conclusion), could be read clearly and were written in ink or clear font.

Of the 27 students in Class VII, 24 were received and analyzed. Three essays were not included in the sample because two did not have a complete structure and one essay could not be read clearly. The 15 students consisted of 12 males and 12 females.

Twenty-four observational reports were analyzed in this study were 24 observational report texts. Each text was 250-350 words in length. All texts were submitted at the end of the observational report text-learning period, after the students had completed the writing process and the teacher had conducted an initial assessment.

These documents were stored as photocopies or digital scans to ensure data authenticity and completeness. Each document was assigned an identification code (S-01 to S-24) to facilitate data identification and tracking during the analysis process.

Based on the observations of the 24 essays analyzed, the following general characteristics were found:

Essay Themes: Students are given the freedom to choose objects for observation. The themes chosen were quite diverse, including: (1) animals (village cats, village chickens, catfish, honey bees, doves, snakes, and monkeys) with seven essays; (2) plants (mango trees, roses, and coconut trees) with three essays; (3) man-made objects (motorcycles, stadiums, laptops, cell phones, and trains) with five essays; (4) places/buildings (soccer fields, traditional markets, school libraries, sports stadiums, school buildings, flower gardens) with six essays; and (5) food and activities (fried rice, rivers, rice fields, soccer) with three essays.

Essay Structure: All 24 essays analyzed had a structure that conformed to the LHO text structure, which consists of a general statement (an opening that introduces the object), section description (a detailed explanation of the object's characteristics), and conclusion (a closing that summarizes important information). However, some essays had fewer detailed section descriptions and less strong conclusions.

Language Style: Most essays were written in a fairly formal style in accordance with the characteristics of LHO texts, although there were still instances of less formal or overly conversational language in some sections. Some students still used informal terms such as "gak," "gampang," "tapi," which were not appropriate for the context of formal essays.

B. Results of Language Error Analysis

The analysis of language errors was conducted based on five main aspects: spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure, and cohesion. The analysis results for each aspect are as follows:

a. Data and Percentage of Spelling Errors

Of the 24 essays analyzed, 156 spelling errors were found out of a total of 847 errors (18.4 % of the total errors). The spelling errors are distributed as follows:

Table 1. Types of Spelling Errors

Types of Spelling Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Capital Letter Writing	78	50.0%
Word Writing	54	34.6%
Writing of Absorption Elements	24	15.4%
Total	156	100%

Capitalization errors were the most frequent type of spelling error, occurring 78 times (50.0 % of spelling errors). word misspellings were second with 54 times (34.6 %) and loanword misspellings were 24 times (15.4%).

This error occurs because students do not capitalize on the beginning of a sentence or the proper names that should be capitalized.

Punctuation errors were the largest error category in this study, with a total of 287 errors (33.9 % of the total 847 errors). The distribution of punctuation errors is as follows.

Table 2. Types of Punctuation Errors

Types of Punctuation Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Use of Commas	156	54.4%
Use of Points	68	23.7%
Use of Semicolons and Colons	42	14.6%
Use of Question Marks and Exclamation Marks	21	7.3%
Total	287	100%

Diction errors are the third error category, with a total of 154 errors (18.2 % of the total errors). The distribution of prediction errors is as follows:

Table 3. Types of Diction Errors

Types of Diction Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Inappropriate Word Choice	89	57.8%
Inappropriate Use of Synonyms	48	31.2%
Ambiguous Use of Words	17	11.0%
Total	154	100%

A study analyzing language errors in observational report texts of grade VII A students at MTS Pancasila Tanjung Beringin revealed a comprehensive error pattern. Of the 24 texts analyzed, 847 language errors were found, distributed across five main categories.

The most prominent findings were:

1. Punctuation errors are a major focus that require special attention, accounting for more than one third of the total errors.
2. Sentence structure errors came in second place, indicating students' difficulty in grammatically arranging ideas.
3. Spelling and diction errors had relatively the same proportion, indicating students' weaknesses in mastering writing mechanics and word choice.
4. Cohesion-coherence errors, although the least, are significant because they can affect the essays's overall quality.

Based on an in-depth analysis, the main causes of the error can be summarized as follows:

1. Pedagogical Factors (40%): Minimal emphasis on learning punctuation and sentence structure in formal learning, as well as limited feedback from teachers.
2. Psycholinguistic Factors (30%): Limited student working memory, lack of attention when writing, and difficulty in organizing ideas simultaneously while paying attention to mechanical aspects.
3. Intralingual Error (20%): Imperfect mastery of Indonesian language rules, especially complex rules.
4. Interlingual Error and Sociolinguistic Factors (10%): The influence of everyday language, social language, and regional languages that are still present in formal writing.

C. Implications of Research Results on the Quality of Writing Learning

The results of the study show that:

1. Writing learning still needs improvement, and the high error rate indicates that learning to write observational report texts is not optimal. According to Sutiyanini and Dwijanto (2022), effective writing learning requires a systematic, sustainable approach.
2. Focusing on the mechanical aspects of writing is needed; the predominance of punctuation errors indicates that learning the mechanics of writing needs to be given more priority.
3. Sentence structure learning needs to be more interactive; with sentence structure errors reaching 21.3 %, learning about sentence structure needs to be improved through more interesting and practical methods.
4. Feedback and remediation are crucial, and As Suryanto et al. (2024) stated, specific feedback and targeted remediation can help students significantly improve their errors.

Based on the research results, the following are suggestions for improving the quality of writing learning, especially observational report texts.

1. Implementation of More Effective Writing Learning Strategies
 - a. Process Writing Model: Implementing a process writing model that involves the stages of writing (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). According to Graves (1983) and Dalman (2014), this model has been proven effective in improving the quality of students' writing (Corbita, 2025).
 - b. Task-Based Learning: Providing authentic and meaningful writing assignments, not just mechanical exercises. For example, students can observe real objects and write reports on their observations.
 - c. Peer Review and Collaboration: Involve students in providing feedback to their peers. According to Prastiwi (2023), peer review helps students learn from their peers' mistakes and is more critical of their work.
2. Emphasis on Certain Linguistic Aspects
 - a. Intensive Punctuation Learning: Considering that punctuation errors account for 33.9 % of total errors, punctuation learning needs to be prioritized. Teachers can:
 1. Using a variety of contexts and exercises
 2. Explain the function of each punctuation mark with concrete examples.
 3. Do regular and continuous exercise
 - b. Systematic Sentence Structure Learning: Using visual or diagrammatic approaches to help students understand sentence structures. For example, tree diagrams or mind maps have been used to show the relationships between sentence components.
 - c. Vocabulary Enrichment: Provides vocabulary and synonym exercises that help students choose words appropriately in the context.
3. Remediation Approach to Address Errors
 - a. Individual Error Analysis: Analyze each student's specific errors and provide targeted remediation exercises. According to Hendrawati et al. (2020), directed remediation is more effective than general remediation is.
 - b. Constructive Feedback: Providing feedback that not only points out the error but also explains the cause of the error and how to correct it. For example: "This sentence uses too many 'and's. Try breaking it into two sentences for clarity."
 - c. Editing Checklist: Provide a checklist to help students self-edit before submitting their work. This checklist focuses on areas that are frequently problematic.
1. Increase Awareness of Language Errors
 - a. Carefully read feedback: Pay attention to and understand feedback from the teacher regarding mistakes made.
 - b. Create a Personal Mistake Log: Record the types of mistakes you frequently make to monitor your progress.
 - c. Learning Indonesian Language Rules: Proactively learning and understanding Indonesian language rules, especially those that often cause problems.
2. Read and Write More
 - a. Reading Quality Texts: Read various types of quality texts (articles, books, and journals) to become accustomed to using a good and correct language.
 - b. Regular Writing Practice: Writing regularly in various contexts to practice writing skills. According to Sugiyono (2020), practice is the key to mastering writing skills.
 - c. Paying attention to others' writing: Analyzing how other writers use punctuation, sentence structure, and word choice.
3. Ask for feedback from teachers
 - a. Dialogue with Teacher: Asking the teacher questions about mistakes that are not understood.
 - b. Personal Guidance: Request personal guidance sessions if needed, especially for difficult aspects.
 - c. Peer Discussion: Discuss with peers about mistakes and how to overcome them.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a comprehensive overview of language errors in observational report texts written by Class VII A students at MTS Pancasila Tanjung Beringin. Through a systematic analysis of the 24 essays, error patterns, causes of errors, and implications for writing learning were identified. Language errors are a natural part of the language learning process and are not simply failures to be criticized but indicators of learning

progress that deserve a deeper understanding. According to Gass and Selinker (2008), as cited in Suryanto et al. (2024), errors provide valuable insights into the ongoing learning process and the stage of students' language development. By understanding error patterns, teachers can design more effective and targeted instruction. For students, awareness of their frequent mistakes can encourage them to be more careful and proactive in their learning.

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Ethical Compliance

All procedures performed in this study involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Data Access Statement

A Data Access Statement is a section in a scientific publication or research report that explains how the data used or generated in a study can be accessed by readers or other researchers. This statement aims to promote transparency, support research reproducibility, and comply with open-access policies, where applicable.

Common Elements in a Data Access Statement:

1. Data Location: Specifies where the data are stored, such as in online repositories (e.g., Zenodo, Dryad, or institutional repositories).
2. Access Instructions: Provides information on how to access the data, such as direct links, digital object identifiers (DOI), or contact details.
3. Data Availability: Indicates whether the data are publicly accessible, available upon request, or restricted due to ethical, legal, or privacy considerations.
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Examples of Data Access Statements:

1. Open Data:
 - "The data supporting this study are openly available in Zenodo at [DOI:10.xxxx/zenodo.xxxx]."
2. Restricted Data:
 - "The data that support the findings of this study are available upon request from the corresponding author. Due to privacy concerns, the data are not publicly available."
3. No Data Available:
 - "No datasets were generated or analyzed during the current study."
4. Conditional Access:
 - "The data supporting this study are available under restricted access and can be obtained upon reasonable request to the corresponding author and with the permission of the ethics committee."

Purpose of a Data Access Statement:

- Reproducibility: Enables other researchers to replicate or verify the findings.
- Collaboration: Encourages further collaboration by sharing data.
- Compliance: Adheres to the policies of funding agencies or journals that require open access to data.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

The authors declare that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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