

INTRODUCTION

One of the English language skills is writing. Numerous experts have provided definitions of writing. Writing is an activity that can be effectively prepared for by practicing the other abilities of speaking, listening, and reading, according to Nation (2009:113). Writing is a type of writing that is used in high school and college courses, claim Oshima and Hogue (2007:3). However, Nordquist (2010) adds that writing is actually a communication activity. It implies that written language should be comprehensible to the reader since it cannot convey the information or provide many additional details immediately.

Writing is considered one of the most challenging skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, as it involves complex processes such as idea generation, organization, grammar use, and vocabulary selection (Hyland, 2019). Among various genres taught in senior high school, descriptive text plays a foundational role in helping students articulate detailed information about people, places, and objects. Husna, Zainil, and Rozimela (2013) state that a descriptive writing is one in which the author attempts to visualize the subject of the description. This indicates that a descriptive writing is one that goes into great detail about the author's imagined world. A writer may use an object's appearance, texture, scent, and/or sound to describe it (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). Furthermore, the main goal of descriptive texts is to describe an object—be it a person, place, or thing—so that readers can visualize it (Afifuddin, 2016).

Despite receiving instruction on the structure and features of descriptive texts, many Indonesian senior high school students continue to make frequent grammatical errors in their writing, which significantly affect the clarity and coherence of their compositions (Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2020). According to Brown (2000), an error is a discernible departure from a native speaker's adult grammar that indicates a learner's proficiency in the target language. Put another way, errors happen when students deviate from the norm, which shows how proficient they are at learning the target language.

Making errors is normal when learning a language because it's regarded as a necessary component of the process; in fact, learning is impossible without making errors. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) asserted that "error is the flawed side of learner speech or writing. It indicates that when learning a language, children might use some improper speech and writing. Students' errors, however, cannot be disregarded since they can aid in their comprehension of language acquisition.

Although numerous studies have investigated students' grammatical errors in English writing, most of them focus on general essay writing or narrative texts (Siregar & Manurung, 2021; Yanti & Ramadhani, 2022). Very few studies have specifically addressed grammatical errors within descriptive text writing, particularly at the senior high school level in the Indonesian context. Furthermore, some recent studies lack a detailed classification of error types based on grammatical categories (e.g., tense, article, preposition, subject-verb agreement), which limits their pedagogical usefulness.

Grammatical competence, as a component of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia, 2014), is essential in writing accuracy. Ellis (2021) emphasizes that understanding learners' grammatical errors can provide insights into their interlanguage development. In line with this, analyzing students' grammatical errors in a specific text type such as descriptive writing becomes essential to improve instructional effectiveness.

The urgency of this study lies in its potential to improve the quality of EFL writing instruction at the senior high school level. By analyzing the most frequent types and causes of grammatical errors in students' descriptive texts, this research can inform the development of more focused and responsive teaching strategies. As Richards and Schmidt (2019) highlight, understanding learner errors is essential for curriculum development and teacher feedback.

In addition, this study contributes to the field of applied linguistics and EFL pedagogy by offering evidence-based insights into students' grammar performance in writing. It will also support the implementation of genre-based approaches in Indonesian classrooms as promoted by Kurikulum Merdeka, which emphasizes the mastery of text types in context.