



An Analysis of Students' Grammar Ability in Writing Procedure Text at SMK Negeri 3 Pekanbaru

Adzania Eria Teagu

Universitas Muhammadiyah Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia

*Penulis Korespondensi: adzania27@gmail.com

Abstract. This research aims to analyze students grammar ability in writing procedure texts at SMK Negeri 3 Pekanbaru. The focus of the study is on students grammatical aspects, particularly the use of imperative sentences, simple present tense, vocabulary choice, and punctuation. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with data collected through documentation (writing tasks) and interviews. The sample consisted of 18 eleventh-grade students of the Fashion Design department, selected randomly from a population of 120 students. The findings revealed that, in general, students were able to compose procedure texts with appropriate structures (goals, materials, and steps). However, errors were still found in verb choices, vocabulary spelling, and punctuation usage. The study concludes that students' grammar ability in writing procedure texts falls into the fair category, yet it needs improvement through consistent practice and greater attention to grammatical rules. This research is expected to provide input for teachers in improving students' writing skills and serve as a reference for future researchers.

Keywords: Grammar Ability; Procedure Text; Students; Vocational High School; Writing.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current global era, English plays a crucial role in almost every aspect of life, especially in education and the professional world. Mastery of English opens wide opportunities for individuals to pursue higher education and better career paths, making it a dynamic and indispensable language in the 21st century (Yamin & Sarno, 2023). As an international language, English functions as a medium of communication across nations and disciplines. In Indonesia, English is taught from elementary school up to the university level, reflecting its importance in education, business, and technology (Nunan, 2020; Harmer, 2019).

Writing is one of the key skills in English learning and is often regarded as the most complex skill to master. According to Dalman (2020), writing requires the integration of linguistic knowledge, vocabulary mastery, and grammatical accuracy. Harmer (2019) adds that writing demands coherence, organization, and a deep understanding of grammatical rules to convey ideas effectively. However, many students in Indonesia still encounter significant difficulties in producing grammatically correct sentences, especially in using tenses and auxiliary verbs (Erkinov & Kilicheva, 2022; Wardah, 2018; Suraprajit, 2021).

Previous studies (Kampookaew, 2020; Meliyanti, 2013; Munawaroh, 2017; Zheng & Park, 2013) show that students often face challenges in selecting appropriate grammatical structures to express their ideas in writing. They tend to make frequent errors in sentence construction, such as incorrect use of to be, verb forms, or tense agreement. For instance, students sometimes confuse between “He play games at home” and “He plays games at home,”

indicating a lack of understanding of subject-verb agreement. These grammatical problems lead to unclear meaning and reduced writing quality (Astrini, Ratminingsih, & Utami, 2020).

In the context of English teaching at vocational high schools, the ability to write procedural texts becomes particularly important. Procedural text aims to explain how to do or make something through clear and structured steps (Lubis & Hasibuan, 2020). According to Dyah (2021) and Miftahul (2020), students often face difficulties in using proper grammar when describing steps, sequencing actions, or using imperative verbs in procedural writing. Therefore, it is essential to analyze students' grammatical accuracy in writing procedural texts to identify their weaknesses and improve their learning outcomes.

SMK Negeri 3 Pekanbaru, as one of the vocational high schools in Indonesia, includes procedural text writing as part of its English curriculum. Observations indicate that students still make frequent grammatical errors, particularly in the use of *to be* and tense selection when writing procedural instructions. This condition highlights the need for deeper analysis and pedagogical improvement.

Based on the above considerations, this study focuses on analyzing students' grammatical usage in writing procedural texts at SMK Negeri 3 Pekanbaru. The findings are expected to provide practical contributions to English teachers in developing more effective teaching materials and writing exercises. Moreover, the study aims to enhance students' writing skills by emphasizing grammatical accuracy and coherence in their procedural writing..

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Importance of Grammar in English Learning

Grammar is one of the fundamental components of language learning. According to Erkinov and Kilicheva (2022), grammar provides the structural framework that allows learners to express meaning accurately and effectively. Without grammatical understanding, communication becomes ambiguous and less meaningful. Similarly, Nunan (2020) states that grammar is the backbone of language that governs how words combine into sentences, ensuring clarity and coherence in communication.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), grammar plays a significant role in helping students construct correct sentences and develop confidence in both spoken and written communication (Richards, 2019). However, for many EFL learners, grammar learning is challenging because it involves abstract rules that require repeated practice and contextual application (Lodico et al., 2014). In Indonesian classrooms, students often struggle with grammatical features such as tenses, subject-verb agreement, and the correct use of *to be*

(Wardah, 2018; Suraprajit, 2021). These difficulties hinder their ability to produce accurate and meaningful texts.

Writing Skills in English Language Teaching

Writing is an essential productive skill that reflects learners' ability to organize thoughts, apply grammar, and use vocabulary appropriately. Harmer (2019) emphasizes that writing is not merely about recording ideas but involves a process of planning, drafting, revising, and editing to produce coherent text. Similarly, Dalman (2020) defines writing as a complex cognitive process that integrates linguistic, psychological, and communicative elements.

In the teaching of English writing, teachers are expected to apply effective strategies that help students overcome their linguistic barriers. Astrini, Ratminingsih, and Utami (2020) found that the use of varied teaching strategies, such as modeling, collaborative writing, and peer feedback, can significantly improve students' writing performance. Sharples (2019) also highlights that collaborative writing promotes negotiation of meaning and helps learners internalize grammatical and stylistic conventions.

However, Benbow (2017) and Bennett (2014) note that large class sizes in developing countries like Indonesia can make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized feedback, resulting in persistent writing errors. Therefore, research on students' specific grammatical difficulties in writing is crucial to developing more targeted interventions and teaching methods.

The Concept of Procedural Text

Procedural text is a type of text designed to explain how to make or do something through a series of logical and sequenced steps. According to Knapp and Watkins (2022), procedural texts typically include goals, materials, and steps, and are written using imperative verbs to instruct readers. In English language teaching, procedural texts help students learn how to organize ideas sequentially while applying correct grammatical forms.

Lubis and Hasibuan (2020) explain that procedural texts are frequently taught in vocational schools because they are relevant to practical and technical fields. Mastering procedural text writing enables students to communicate instructions clearly and professionally, which is essential for workplace communication. Nevertheless, Dyah (2021) found that many students struggle with constructing grammatically correct sentences when writing procedural texts, particularly in using verb forms and conjunctions to show sequence.

Previous Studies Related to Grammar and Procedural Text Writing

Several studies have analyzed students' difficulties in grammar and writing procedural texts. Kampookaew et al. (2020) investigated the use of collaborative writing in improving grammatical accuracy among Thai students and found that peer feedback enhanced sentence structure and vocabulary use. Similarly, Miftahul (2020) conducted a classroom action research on improving students' ability to write procedural texts through demonstration techniques and reported significant improvement in grammar and sentence organization.

Susanti et al. (2021) studied ninth-grade students' writing of procedural texts and revealed that most errors were related to tenses, verb forms, and the misuse of *to be*. Yarni et al. (n.d.) also found similar results, emphasizing that students often failed to differentiate between present and past tenses in procedural contexts. In addition, Jayanti (2022) noted that descriptive and procedural writing share common grammatical challenges, particularly in maintaining consistency between subject and verb forms.

Overall, previous research indicates that grammatical mastery is a persistent issue in EFL writing. However, limited studies specifically focus on analyzing grammatical errors in procedural text writing at the vocational high school level. Therefore, this research aims to fill that gap by analyzing students' grammatical use in writing procedural texts at SMK Negeri 3 Pekanbaru. The findings are expected to contribute to the improvement of grammar instruction and writing pedagogy in Indonesian vocational schools.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher will use a qualitative descriptive research design. According to Ary (2018), descriptive research is research that asks about the nature, occurrence, or distribution of variables; this research involves describing, but not manipulating, variables. This means this research is intended to explain or describe a situation, even an object, whether a person or an object, of anything related to the variable and cannot be manipulated. Meanwhile, Lodico et al. (2020:112) explain that qualitative research is united by flexible and naturalistic data collection methods, and usually does not use standard instruments as its primary data source. This research will focus on examining social phenomena and voicing the feelings and perceptions of participants in the study. This is based on the belief that knowledge comes from the social environment and an understanding of social knowledge. A qualitative descriptive research design is a scientific method that involves describing and describing the behavior of subjects without influencing them in any way. This research is included in

qualitative descriptive research because it will report information by describing students' grammatical abilities in writing procedural texts.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSION

This section presents the findings of the study regarding students' difficulties in using grammar when writing procedural texts at SMK Negeri 3 Pekanbaru. The analysis focused on several key aspects: the use of determiners, vocabulary mastery, and spelling or mechanical accuracy. Each of these aspects is discussed in detail below.

Students' Problems in Using Determiners in Procedural Texts

The analysis revealed that one of the most frequent grammatical problems encountered by students was the misuse of **determiners**. Errors commonly appeared when students used inappropriate determiners with countable or uncountable nouns. For instance, students often placed *this* before plural nouns, used *any* in affirmative sentences, or pluralized uncountable nouns after quantifiers such as *a lot of*. Examples include “this steps” instead of “these steps” and “a lot of waters” instead of “a lot of water.”

These mistakes indicate that students have not yet developed a strong understanding of the distinction between countable and uncountable nouns. According to Erkinov and Kilicheva (2022), mastery of grammar requires not only memorization of rules but also the ability to apply them contextually in sentence construction. Similarly, Richards (2019) emphasizes that grammatical errors in determiners often arise from first-language interference, limited exposure to English input, and insufficient practice.

In the context of procedural texts, determiners play a vital role in clarifying the quantity and specificity of ingredients or materials—especially in instruction-type writing. Incorrect use of determiners can cause ambiguity and misinterpretation of procedural steps. Therefore, teachers should provide explicit grammar instruction through contextualized examples to help students internalize determiner usage appropriately (Harmer, 2019).

Students' Weaknesses in Memorizing Vocabulary

Another challenge identified in this study was students' limited vocabulary mastery, particularly related to **imperative verbs** used in procedural texts. During class observations, students were found to have difficulty recalling or using essential action verbs such as *stir*, *pour*, *boil*, *slice*, and *assemble*. Many students substituted these with incorrect or general verbs, which reduced the clarity and accuracy of their instructions.

According to Dalman (2020), vocabulary mastery is an essential component of writing because it influences one's ability to express ideas precisely and fluently. Without adequate

vocabulary, students tend to rely on literal translation from their first language, which often results in grammatical and semantic errors. Dyah (2021) also found that students with limited vocabulary faced greater challenges in understanding and constructing procedural texts, especially when describing sequential actions.

The findings align with Astrini, Ratminingsih, and Utami (2020), who argue that lack of vocabulary exposure and practice leads to weak word recall during writing tasks. Teachers, therefore, need to introduce more vocabulary-building activities—such as *word mapping*, *contextual guessing*, and *action-based demonstrations*—to strengthen students' lexical repertoire. By mastering key verbs and nouns related to procedures, students will be more confident and accurate in composing step-by-step instructions.

Students' Difficulties with Spelling and Mechanics

Spelling accuracy and mechanical conventions are crucial in writing, as they contribute to the readability and professionalism of a text. The data indicated that many students still struggled with **spelling rules**, capitalization, and punctuation. Common examples included incorrect spellings such as *joos* instead of *juice* and inconsistent capitalization at the beginning of sentences.

Mechanics in writing refers to the correct use of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization to ensure that meaning is conveyed effectively (Tarigan, 2021). Errors such as omitting commas after transition signals (*first, then, after that*) or failing to capitalize the initial letter of each step indicate that students have not yet internalized the conventions of written English. According to Brown and Yule (2018), such mechanical errors often occur because learners focus more on generating ideas than on surface-level accuracy.

Despite these challenges, some students demonstrated good organization in their procedural texts. They followed the correct **generic structure**, including the goal, materials, and steps, which reflects their understanding of the text's overall framework (Knapp & Watkins, 2022). However, the presence of spelling and punctuation errors shows that mechanical aspects need more emphasis during classroom instruction.

Teachers should integrate focused editing sessions and peer correction activities to help students notice and correct their own mechanical mistakes. As suggested by Sharples (2019), collaborative writing allows learners to reflect on form, accuracy, and structure through peer discussion, thus improving their attention to detail in future writing tasks.

Summary of Discussion

Overall, the findings suggest that grammatical errors—particularly in determiner usage—stem from a lack of conceptual understanding, while vocabulary and spelling

weaknesses reflect insufficient language exposure and practice. These results are consistent with previous studies (Miftahul, 2020; Susanti et al., 2021; Yarni et al., n.d.) that identified grammar and vocabulary as major barriers in EFL students' procedural writing performance.

Therefore, pedagogical improvements are needed, including:

1. Explicit grammar teaching that focuses on contextualized examples of determiners and tenses.
2. Vocabulary enrichment strategies involving action-based learning and visual aids related to procedural steps.
3. Writing mechanics workshops emphasizing punctuation, capitalization, and spelling correction.

By addressing these areas, English teachers at vocational schools can enhance students' writing competence and help them produce more accurate and coherent procedural texts.

5. CONCLUSION

Related to the objectives of this research, there are 2 types of procedure text found in student's worksheets. Among them are procedure text how to make something (recipes) and procedure text how to do something (instruction). Based on the findings from this research, procedure text of recipes is the most dominant choice for students and it was represented from 12 student's worksheets. And the second type of procedure text was procedure text of instruction which was the student's choice and it was presented from 6 student's worksheet.

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