



## ANALYZING SPELLING ERRORS IN EFL NARRATIVE WRITING: INSIGHTS FROM INDONESIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### **Abstract:**

Spelling is one of the most important aspects for EFL learners to master in order to achieve good competence in writing. However, many learners still struggle with English spelling accuracy, which often results in errors. Analyzing students' errors is essential to understand their learning problems and needs. Hence, this study is aimed at analyzing and finding out the types of spelling errors and the most frequent type of spelling error in students' narrative writing at one of the junior high schools in an Indonesian EFL setting using the classification of Bestgen and Granger (2011) to extend knowledge from the previous literature. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach, with tests and documentation serving as the data collection technique. Using purposive sampling, 73 students' narrative writings were analyzed, and it was found that students made nine types of spelling errors. The types were: omission of letter, addition of letter, single letter instead of double letter, double letter instead of single letter, substitution of letter, interchange of two adjacent letters, error involving an apostrophe, segmentation error, and multiple errors. It was also found that the most frequent type of spelling error was omission of letter, contributing to 21.1% of the errors. From the errors, possible factors of students' spelling errors were also discussed. The errors show that students still struggle with English writing, especially spelling. Therefore, students need more practice and regular exposure to English writing, while educators should ensure that spelling receives adequate emphasis in classroom instruction and materials.

**Keywords:** *EFL Students, Error Analysis, Narrative Text, Writing*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Becoming proficient in any language requires students to master several skills, including speaking, writing, listening, and reading. English is no exception when it comes to mastering those skills. For L2 (second language) or EFL (English as a foreign language) learners to become proficient in the language, writing is one of the abilities they must master. This is because the written form of communication plays an essential role in today's society, especially due to the internet and digitalization. Therefore, it is necessary that English writing be taught and acquired, particularly in the context of L2 or EFL (Fitria, 2020). This is as shown in the English curriculum in Indonesia, where English functions as EFL; students are taught several types of written text through a genre-based approach, such as recount, narrative, reports, procedure, and descriptive text.

Writing involves the ability to spell the word correctly, besides other skills such as grammar and punctuation. Spelling is the work of combining letters to create words. Carney (2008) defined spelling as the arrangement of both vowel and consonant letters. It is among the crucial components of writing, along with grammar and punctuation. Like any other aspect of language, spelling is important to conduct communication through writing (Westwood, 2018). Incorrect spelling will alter the intended meaning of any written material. Even worse, it can also make the text incomprehensible (Altamimi & Rashid, 2019). Errors in vocabulary, which constitute spelling errors, are said to be more disruptive, as the interpretation is merely based on what is written



without any oral explanation. Therefore, it is important to follow the rule of proper spelling as a guide to help writers portray a word's correct meaning.

However, one of the most challenging skills for English as a foreign language (EFL) or second language (L2) learners to acquire is writing (Richards & Renandya, 2010). In the Indonesian context, students struggle with English spelling up until their high school years, despite the introduction of English in their early years. This is as shown by several studies showing that many Indonesian EFL students lack good spelling proficiency (Muhassin et al., 2020; Myeli et al., 2024; Noprianti, 2023; Siskawati, 2020). This shows that spelling is still a challenge for Indonesian EFL students to be proficient in English, especially in writing. This challenge can be attributed to several factors, including the different writing systems between English and the Indonesian language. This is as observed, Indonesian students commonly write the word as they hear it and write it as it is written in the Indonesian language, such as "favorit" for "favourite", "uniq" for "unique", "olweys" for "always", "diferent" for "different", and "everage" for "average" (Muhassin et al., 2020).

Spelling errors are one category of several writing problems besides grammar, lexical, and mechanical errors. Al-Jarf (2023) stated that spelling errors encompass any misspelling as well as any inaccurate graphemes (vowel, consonant, single vowel, phonogram, suffix, or prefix) that appear inside words. Any alterations to a spelling include adding, removing, switching out for another grapheme, and reversing a grapheme. Spelling errors include any additions, deletions, substitutions of other graphemes, and reversals of graphemes. Liu (2015) stated these errors might be typographical or cognitive in nature. Typographic errors include letter addition, deletion, replacement, transposition, and inversion; cognitive errors, on the other hand, are caused by sound similarity, such as spelling "acedemy" instead of "academy" (Muhassin et al., 2020). Spelling errors, besides affecting the delivery of the information, can also negatively affect readers' judgment (Brown, 2014). Spelling errors might be regarded as a sign of neglect and lack of education.

Spelling errors happen due to some factors. Some have identified the factors causing or contributing to spelling errors. According to Harmer (2015), spelling errors are caused by the fact that different English dialects or varieties have different spellings, for instance, "color" in the US and "colour" in the UK. Furthermore, Harmer stated that spelling mistakes arise from an inconsistency between a word's pronunciation and its written form. Students, in the Indonesian context, tend to use the rules of Bahasa Indonesia's writing, which is consistent between letters and sounds, and apply them in English spelling. This suggests that the influence of their L1 (first language) is the reason behind students' spelling errors (Senowarsito & Ardini, 2019). Moreover, in this digital era where spellcheckers exist, students tend to use spellcheckers or autocorrect in their writing, especially in English. Whether writing for an assignment or communicational purposes through social media. This fact may be a contributing reason to students' spelling mistakes since students' usage of spelling checkers causes them to become less conscious of how to correctly spell English words (Risnati, 2016).



Spelling errors have been categorized by some. Cook (1999) conducted an investigation and found that the most frequent spelling errors fall into four categories: insertion, transposition, substitution, and omission. Besides Cook, Carney (1997) classified spelling errors into five categories, namely variant (similarly heard word written with incorrect letters, e.g. "preffured" for "preferred"), slip (accidental errors, often occur in words with double letters, e.g. "ommitted" for "omitted"), malapropism (word choice error due to a similar sound, eg. "rise" for "rest"), jumbling (confusion between the element of word structure, e.g. "feild" for "field", "pheasible" for "feasible") and split (wrongly putting gap, e.g. "out side", "to gather"). Meanwhile, errors in spelling were categorized into nine categories by Bestgen and Granger (2011). Besides traditional categorization of errors, such as omission, addition, substitution, swap, etc., they also include categories less often found in the literature, such as doubling, splitting, or joining.

Several studies have analyzed the errors made by students in their written compositions. A portion of those studies examined errors in spelling made by students in university settings in the Middle East and Indonesia (Ahmed, 2017; Al-Zuoud & Kabilan, 2013; Fitria, 2020). Whereas other studies focused on analyzing spelling errors in students' written compositions in the school setting, including high school (Imtiaz et al., 2023; Risnati, 2016; Siskawati, 2020) and junior high school (Muhassin et al., 2020; Ningrum, 2017; Noprianti, 2023). These studies either examined student dictation test results to identify spelling errors or examined the various text forms that students created, including argumentative, exposition, and descriptive essays.

Hence, to extend the knowledge from the previous literature, this study focuses on and aims to analyze the spelling errors in narrative text written by students in a junior high school setting, where the study in this context is limited, as shown by the previous research. Moreover, this research employs the latest and a different perspective of error analysis by adapting the theory by Bestgen and Granger (2011) in analyzing the spelling error. Analyzing students' errors and mistakes is essential in understanding learners' problems and needs and then addressing the problem accordingly (Gass et al., 2020). Therefore, in accordance with the study's objective, the following two research questions are addressed: (1) What types of spelling errors are found in the narrative writings of grade IX students at SMP Negeri 2 Mojokerto? (2) What is the most frequent type of spelling error made by grade IX students at SMP Negeri 2 Mojokerto in their narrative writing?

The findings of this study are expected to provide practical implications for English language teaching, especially in terms of teaching spelling. Identifying the types and most frequent types of spelling errors can help teachers develop better instructional strategies to address the common spelling challenges of Indonesian students. The results of this study can also inform curriculum designers to design spelling instructions that effectively address students' problems in spelling. Therefore, it will ultimately improve the students' writing and could play a significant role in helping them become proficient writers.

## 2. METHOD

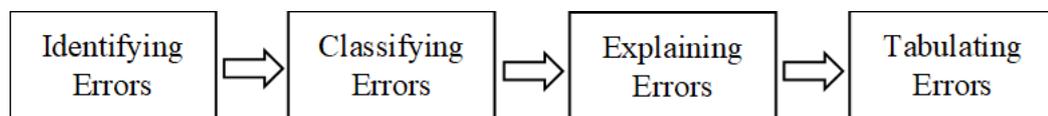
This study is descriptive qualitative in nature since its objective is to use the Error Analysis framework to analyze the spelling errors students make when writing narrative texts. According to Cresswell (2014), descriptive qualitative design seeks to understand and illustrate the phenomenon related to the problem under investigation in its natural environment. Furthermore, to comprehend a particular phenomenon of interest, qualitative research involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting large amounts of narrative and visual data (Gay et al., 2018). This study attempts to analyze, categorize, describe, and find the most common spelling errors in EFL students' narrative text writing.

The narrative writing samples that were gathered from 73 9th-grade students at the State Junior High School 2 Mojokerto, also known as SMP Negeri 2 Mojokerto, are the subject of this study. The sampling used in this research is purposive. Purposive sampling is defined as the deliberate selection of subjects or locations by the researcher to understand the main phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). The sampling criteria were students who produced narrative text among other texts during the writing test. Among 73 chosen students, 32 were male, and 41 were female, with language proficiency backgrounds ranging from pre-intermediate to intermediate.

The researchers used a test and documents to collect the data for this study. The test was done for students through an exam for 9th-grade students. The students were required to write a narrative or report text in the examination. They were permitted to choose their writing topic as long as it was in the type of narrative or report text. They were given approximately 30 minutes to complete the writing exam. During the exam, students were not allowed to consult their dictionaries. Then, students' narrative compositions from the exam were collected as documents, which were further analyzed to find the spelling errors using the classification of Bestgen and Granger (2011).

The researcher employed several steps to analyze spelling errors. Ellis (2008) described the steps as shown in Figure 1:

**Figure 1** Steps of data analysis



As seen in the figure, there were four steps for analyzing spelling errors. The first step was identifying errors. This is when the researcher identified the spelling errors in students' narrative writings. Secondly, the errors were classified. In this stage, the researcher classified the error into some categories. Spelling errors were classified into nine different types, as proposed by Bestgen and Granger (2011). Thirdly, the errors were explained. At this point, the researcher described the kinds of spelling errors students make in their narrative writings. Moving on, the last step is tabulating errors. In this step, the percentage of the error was calculated by the researcher, who then arranged the results into a table according to the categories of errors in spelling. In



tabulating the errors, the researcher used descriptive statistics using frequency and percentage. A qualitative study may make use of statistics regarding the frequency of a specific case (Perry, 2017). The researchers employed the following formula to tabulate the error:

$$P = F/N \times 100$$

Where:

P = The percentage of spelling errors

F = The frequency of spelling error

N = The total number of spelling errors/number of errors

### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After the test was done through an English practical exam for students, the narrative compositions they produced were then collected as the data source. Subsequently, the type and most common spelling errors in the narrative writing produced by the students were identified by analyzing the compositions. Spelling errors were discovered in 69 out of the 73 students' narrative writings.

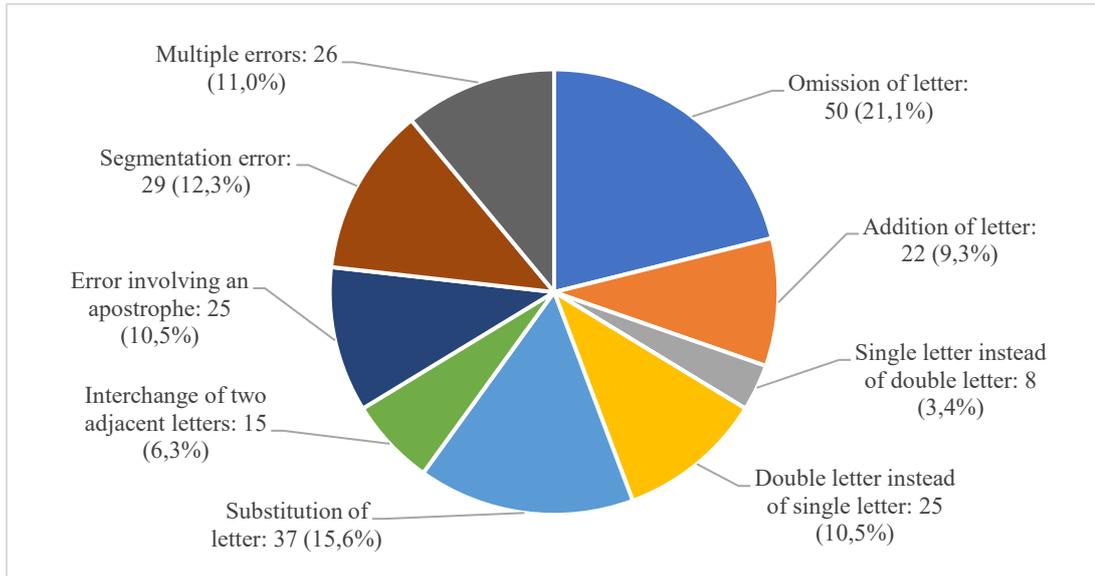
As previously mentioned, Bestgen and Granger's (2011) classification is the basis for this study's investigation of students' spelling errors. It states that there are nine different types of spelling errors found in students' narrative writings. Those are omission of letter, addition of letter, single letter instead of double letter, double letter instead of single letter, substitution of letter, interchange of two adjacent letters, error involving an apostrophe, erroneous splitting or joining of words (segmentation error), and two or more errors of the same or of different types (multiple errors). 237 errors in spelling were discovered in the narrative compositions of 69 students. The type, frequency, and number of errors in students' narrative writing are presented in the table below:

**Table 1** The Frequency and the Percentage of Spelling Errors

No	Type of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Omission of letter	50	21,1%
2.	Addition of letter	22	9,3%
3.	Single letter instead of double letter	8	3,4%
4.	Double letter instead of single letter	25	10,5%
5.	Substitution of letter	37	15,6%
6.	Interchange of two adjacent letters	15	6,3%
7.	Error involving an apostrophe	25	10,5%
8.	Segmentation error	29	12,3%
9.	Multiple errors	26	11,0%
Total		237	100%

To visualize the data, a pie chart can be seen in Figure 2 as follows:

**Figure 2** The Frequency and Percentage of Spelling Errors



As shown in the table and figure above, it was found that students made the most errors in the type of omission of letter (21,1%), where they omitted one or more letters from the word. Then, the second most frequent error made by students was substitution error (15,6%), where students substituted one or more letters with the wrong letter in a word. This type of error was followed by segmentation errors as the third most common error made by students (12,3%), where students mistakenly joined or split one or two words. The fourth most common error made by students in their narrative writing was multiple errors (11%), where students made more than one type of error in writing a word. Multiple errors were then followed by single letter instead of double letter error, and error involving an apostrophe with both being the fifth most common error, having a percentage of 10,5% each. Single letter instead of double letter error happened when students wrote only a single letter in a word that was supposed to have a double letter. Meanwhile, error involving an apostrophe occurred when students mistakenly put an apostrophe or did not put an apostrophe in a word where an apostrophe was supposed to be put.

Moving on, the sixth common error in students' writing was addition of letter (9,3%), where students added one or more letters in writing a word, hence the word was misspelt. Addition of letter was then followed by interchange of two adjacent letters, with a percentage of 6,3% and is the seventh most common error found in students' writing. This error occurred when students changed the position of two neighboring letters. Then, the eighth most common spelling error found in students' narrative writings, or the least error compared to the eight previous types, was single letter instead of double letter, having the smallest percentage of 3,4%, and occurred when students missed a letter in a word that was spelled with a double letter. Further descriptions of each type of error are shown below:



### 3.1 Omission of Letter

The most frequent error in students' narrative writing, as indicated in the table, was omission of letter. The total number of omission of letter error found in students' text was 50 errors, which contributed to 21.1% of errors. Omission of letter is omitting one or more letters in a word. Students made this type of error when they omitted a letter or letters in a word. Examples of this type of spelling error made by the students include the following:

**Table 2** Examples of Omission of Letter Error

No	Error	Corrected
1.	"When he <i>reched</i> the door, it was opened" (T68)	"When he <i>reached</i> the door, it was opened"
2.	"Timun Mas opened the <i>fourt</i> bag" (T05)	"Timun Mas opened the <i>fourth</i> bag"
3.	"He was <i>swalloed</i> by the sea" (T44)	"He was <i>swallowed</i> by the sea"

From the example above, in the first example, the student omitted the letter "a" from the word "reached" and misspelled the word as "reched". Furthermore, the student misspelled the word "fourth" as "fourt" in the second example because he omitted the final letter, "h," making the letter appear as "fourt" while describing the main character, Timun Mas, who opened the fourth bag from a holy man who gave her four bags. Meanwhile, in the third example, the student spelled the word "swallowed" as "swalloed" and omitted the letter "w". The correct spelling in this context should be "swallowed" as the student described a character, Sura, who was sunk into the sea.

### 3.2 Addition of Letter

The next type of error identified in students' narrative writing was addition of letter. Addition of letter is adding one or more letters in writing certain English words. This error happened when students added extra letters while writing a word. In students' narrative writing, there were 22 addition of letter errors (or 9.3% of the total). Below are the examples of addition of letter errors found in students' compositions:

**Table 3** Examples of Addition of Letter Error

No	Error	Corrected
1.	"He <i>leaf</i> t the fish in the kitchen" (T35)	"He <i>left</i> the fish in the kitchen"
2.	"With a <i>triumphant</i> laught, Kancil reached..." (T02)	"With a <i>triumphant</i> laugh, Kancil reached..."
3.	"One day, she was so <i>hungriy</i> " (T30)	"One day, she was so <i>hungry</i> "

The student misspelled the word "left" as "leaf" and added an extra letter "a" to the word "left" in the first example. Meanwhile, in the second example, the student misspelled the word "laugh" as "laught" after adding the letter "t" at the end. Lastly, in



the third example, the student added an extra letter "i" to the word "hungry", which made it become "hungriy".

### 3.3 Single Letter instead of Double Letters

This was the least occurring spelling error in students' narrative writings, with the occurrence of 8, and with a percentage of 3,4%. When students incorrectly spelled a word that has two letters instead of one, they made "single letter instead of double letter" error. Similarly, they might incorrectly spell the word by one letter instead of two. The examples of such errors are as follows:

**Table 4** Examples of Single Letter instead of Double Letter Error

No	Error	Corrected
1.	"She had the floor <i>swaped</i> " (T02)	"She had the floor <i>swapped</i> "
2.	"Cinderella <i>sucesfully</i> attracted..." (T06)	"Cinderella <i>successfully</i> attracted..."
3.	"Mother has to <i>arange</i> this room" (T54)	"Mother has to <i>arrange</i> this room"

In the first example, the student wrote the word "swapped" as "swaped", hence it is considered an error, where she wrote the supposed double "s" with the single "s" while describing a character, who swapped the floor, so then it becomes beautiful marble. The student misspelled "successfully" instead of "succesfully" in the second example by leaving out the extra "s." Furthermore, the student spelled the word "arrange" incorrectly as "arange" in the third example by leaving off the supposed double "r".

### 3.4 Double Letter instead of Single Letter

"Double letter instead of single letter" refers to writing a word with two letters when it should only have one letter. This type of error was found 25 times in students' narrative writings and contributes to the 10,5% of errors. These are examples of this error found in the students' compositions:

**Table 5** Examples of Double Letter instead of Single Letter Error

No	Error	Corrected
1.	"It is <i>eassy</i> , my lord" (T11)	"It is <i>easy</i> , my lord"
2.	"Bawang Putih <i>lookked</i> for them" (T17)	"Bawang Putih <i>looked</i> for them"
3.	"The moral <i>vallue</i> of this story..." (T07)	"The moral <i>value</i> of this story"

In the first example, the student misspelled the word "easy" as "eassy" by adding an extra "s" where it is supposed to be just a single "s". In the second example, the word "looked" was misspelled as "lookked" by adding an extra "k". Finally, the word "value" was written as "vallue" in the third example because the student added an extra "l" to it.

### 3.5 Substitution of Letter

Another type of error in spelling discovered in students' compositions was letter substitution. Letter substitution occurs when a particular letter in a word is substituted with another. When students substituted the wrong letter for the correct one in a word, they made this error. There are 37 substitution errors found in the student's text, and they contribute to 15,6% of errors. The examples of this error found in students' narrative writing are as follows:

**Table 6** Examples of Substitution of Letter Error

No	Error	Corrected
1.	"Don't be a <i>bed</i> people" (T22)	"Don't be a <i>bad</i> people"
2.	"The sun will <i>rice</i> " (T23)	"The sun will <i>rise</i> "
3.	"The sun burned our <i>badies</i> " (T11)	"The sun burned our <i>bodies</i> "

The first and second examples demonstrate how a word's meaning can be altered by a spelling error. In the first example, the student wrote the word "bad" as "bed" by replacing the letter "a" with the letter "e". However, the word "bed" did not fit this context because the character in this story was advising another character to be a good person; therefore, it is a spelling error. This also applies to the second example, in which the student substituted the letter "c" for the letter "s" in the word "rise" as one character warned the main character of the story, Bandung Bondowoso, to build the temple quicker, as the sun would rise soon. In the meantime, the word "bodies" was misspelled as "badies" in the third example as the student changed the letter "o" to the letter "a".

### 3.6 Interchange of Two Adjacent Letters

Interchange of two adjacent letters is when neighboring letters are interchanged or transposed. This error happened when students reversed the position of two neighboring letters. This error occurred 15 times and contributed to 6,3% of the total spelling errors. Examples of this type of error found in students' text are displayed as follows:

**Table 7** Examples of Interchange of Two Adjacent Letters Error

No	Error	Corrected
1.	"Can you help me to buy some <i>grocerise</i> ?" (T26)	"Can you help me to buy some <i>groceries</i> ?"
2.	"She woke up <i>form</i> her sleep" (T36)	"She woke up <i>from</i> her sleep"
3.	"A <i>strom</i> destroyed his ship" (T44)	"A <i>storm</i> destroyed his ship"

The student misplaced the letters "e" and "s" in the word "groceries" in the first example. The letters "e" and "s" are supposed to be written "es" instead of "se". The second example shows that the error changes the meaning of the word. The student interchanged the letter "r" and "o" in the word "from", where it was supposed to be written "ro" instead of "or", and in this context, the word "form" was unsuitable because the student was describing the main character in the story of Sleeping Beauty, a princess, who woke up after being kissed by a prince, hence it is a spelling error.

Meanwhile, the last example shows that students interchanged the letter "o" with "r" in the word "storm", so then it was misspelt as "strom".

### 3.7 Error Involving an Apostrophe

The apostrophe error is the next type of error. This error in spelling happened when students omitted or improperly placed the apostrophe in words by placing it in the incorrect position. It was found that students' narrative writing contained 25 apostrophe-related errors. These errors account for 10,5% of all errors discovered. The following are instances of apostrophe errors that students have made in their writing:

**Table 8** Examples of Apostrophe Error

No	Error	Corrected
1.	"...to keep his <i>fathers</i> promise" (T12)	"...to keep his <i>father's</i> promise"
2.	"... <i>thats'</i> very easy" (T46)	"... <i>that's</i> very easy"
3.	"I <i>dont</i> want to go" (T8)	"I <i>don't</i> want to go"

The first error shows that the students did not put the apostrophe to denote the possessive form, where an apostrophe should be added between the word "father" and the letter "s". The second example shows that the student mistakenly put the apostrophe at the end of the letter "s" after the word "that", where it is supposed to be placed between the word "that" and the letter "s" as a contraction of "that is". Lastly, the third example shows that the student did not put any apostrophe in the contraction "don't".

### 3.8 Erroneous Splitting or Joining of Words (Segmentation Error)

When two words are incorrectly split or joined, it is known as a segmentation error or erroneous splitting or joining of words. This happened when students mistakenly put or omitted a space in a word or two. This error occurred 29 times and contributed to 12,3% of errors. The examples of segmentation errors as found in students' narrative writing are as follows:

**Table 9** Examples of Segmentation Error

No	Error	Corrected
1.	"....asked him to <i>comeback</i> in two years" (T69)	"....asked him to <i>come back</i> in two years"
2.	"She lived with her <i>step mother</i> " (T17)	"She lived with her <i>stepmother</i> "
3.	"I'll excuse <i>my self</i> " (T28)	"I'll excuse <i>myself</i> "

The first example shows that the student mistakenly used the noun "comeback" by joining the words "come" and "back". The correct word in this context should be the verb "come back" as the student described a character in a story who asked another character to come back within two years. The second example shows that the student made an error by splitting the word "stepmother" to refer to a non-biological mother. Lastly, from the third example, it is known that the student made a word segmentation error by splitting the reflexive pronoun "myself" to become "my self". The correct word

in this context is "myself" as the student described a character who will excuse himself from doing a bad thing.

### 3.9 Two or More Errors of the Same or of Different Types (Multiple Errors)

Multiple errors occur when two or more errors occur in a word, whether they are the same sort of error or an entirely different form of error (Bestgen & Granger, 2011). This is also referred to as "two or more errors of the same type or different types". This type of error was found 26 times in students' narrative writing, which accounts for 11% of the total errors. The following are some instances of multiple errors that were discovered in students' text:

**Table 10** Examples of Multiple Errors

No	Error	Corrected
1.	"...called Snow White <i>trought</i> the window" (T34)	"...called Snow White <i>through</i> the window"
2.	"...the evil <i>stept</i> mother" (T41)	"...the evil <i>stepmother</i> "
3.	"Who is the <i>preti</i> woman in the kingdom?" (T42)	"Who is the <i>pretty</i> woman in the kingdom?"

The error in the type of omission and addition can be observed in the first instance. The first letter "h" was omitted from the word "through", and then the letter "t" was added at the end of the word, leaving it written as "trought" instead of "through". The second example of error is in the type of addition and segmentation error, where the word "stepmother" was split between "step" and "mother", and then the letter "t" was added to the world "step", which made it written as "stept mother" instead of "step mother". At last, the third example demonstrates that the error is in the word substitution and single letter type instead of double letter type. In this example, the letter "t" in the word "pretty" was written once, and the letter "y" was substituted with the letter "I".

From the result, it is known that students made nine types of spelling errors, with letter omission being the most frequent, with a percentage of 21,1%. This finding is in line with several previous studies, which also found that EFL students often made letter omission errors in their English spelling (Ahmed, 2017; Fitria, 2020; Imtiaz et al., 2023). This shows that EFL students frequently omit letters in producing written forms of the English language, which then leads to spelling errors. From the results, the researchers infer that spelling errors in students' narrative writing in this study are possibly caused by several factors. One significant factor is phonological interference. This is evident in several examples, such as writing "reched" instead of "reached" and "swalloed" instead of "swallowed". This cause is explained by Harmer (2001), who states that spelling errors are due to indefinite correspondence between what is written and what is spoken, which is the nature of the English language (intralingual). Besides Harmer, Al-Jarf (2023) also posits that spelling errors stem from phonological problems, which refers to errors where misspelled words do not sound similar to the target word because the entire word, vowel, consonant, prefix, syllable, and grapheme clusters are either not heard at all or are not added with another letter.



Besides that, the cause of the error can be interlingual, in which students are still influenced by their native tongue to write words in English (Miressa & Dumessa, 2011). The interlingual influence is particularly evident in the way students applied the phonetic consistency of Bahasa Indonesia to English spelling. Unlike English, Bahasa Indonesia has a nearly one-to-one correspondence between what is written and what is spoken. Hence, students substituted the letter that corresponds to the sound in Bahasa Indonesia's writing, for example, "rise" was misspelled with "rice" as in Bahasa Indonesia, the letter "s" is always read as "/s/", while in English, the sound "/s/" can be represented by several letters, including "s" and "c". This is also evident from previous studies done in the Indonesian context, where students tend to substitute, omit, or add letters in writing English letters to represent their phonetics (Fitria, 2020; Ningrum, 2017; Noprianti, 2023; Risnati, 2016; Siskawati, 2020). Nevertheless, further research is required to quantify the extent of interlingual influence on students' spelling.

Additionally, it is possible that the spelling errors are caused by students not paying attention to the correct spacing of the English words (Paramitha & Syahrul, 2021), especially in the type of segmentation error. This can be due to the lack of exposure to English words and due to a lack of knowledge of the English part of speech. This is as shown in one of the examples where students put the wrong space in the verb "come back" and wrote it as the noun "comeback". Furthermore, students' spelling errors, especially in the type of involving an apostrophe, are due to the students not having the correct understanding of how the apostrophe is used, especially in writing the possessive form, and in contractions. This is as shown in some samples that students still write the possessive form without an apostrophe ("father's" written as "fathers"), and do not put the apostrophe in the correct position when contracting a word ("that's" written as "thats"). Moreover, spelling errors in students' writing, especially involving words that contain single and double letters such as "admitted" or "success", are possibly due to the confusion between which letters should be written as double, and which one is not, thus making the students cannot make the correct decision between the two (Paramitha & Syahrul, 2021).

Besides the previous factors, students may make spontaneous or accidental errors. This is when the students know the correct spelling of the word but still make errors due to recklessness (Muhassin et al., 2020). This is shown in some cases, where students previously wrote the error in a certain word, but then wrote the correct form as they repeated the word. Accidental errors can result from the poor condition of the writer, such as fatigue, fear, and memory lapses, which explains why errors caused by this type are unsystematic (Fachrezzy et al., 2022). The accidental error can be seen from the example of an error in the type of interchange of two adjacent letters, where it is possible for students to be confused and careless when writing a word due to their negative condition when writing. Therefore, they exchange the letter location in a word. This is confirmed by Carney (1997) that cases of transposition, such as spelling "rough" as "ruogh", "form" as "from", "storm" as "strom", can be attributed to confusion and carelessness in writing the target language.



Other sources of spelling errors can be due to students' transition of competence to acquire English spelling. This is because students are still in the early developmental stage of Second Language Acquisition, and they are overcoming a variety of obstacles in their linguistic intuition to accommodate the comprehension of the target language (Muhassin et al., 2020). According to Muqbel (2018), the process of transferring knowledge from one's mother tongue to the target language, including morphological, grammatical, and semantic aspects, is what defines this transitional period. Therefore, in this transitional stage, students still have inadequate language knowledge, which results in an incomplete understanding of the L2's writing system or spelling. This is confirmed by Altamimi and Rashid (2019) that incorrect spelling can occasionally be linked to a transitional stage in which a learner is picking up the right spelling, but it is not yet stable.

Hence, from the analysis, this study has a contribution mainly to give a big picture for teachers to map students' spelling errors in writing narrative text. Therefore, it brings the implication that can be discussed to address students' problems in writing, especially spelling errors, among many other errors. These insights can help educators facilitate students' spelling development and improve their English proficiency through correct interventions. Educators can implement explicit spelling instruction, addressing the most frequent errors and mother tongue interference. For example, contrastive analysis activities can help students understand better the difference in writing systems between English and Bahasa Indonesia. Furthermore, educators can incorporate dictation exercises, especially with the help of digital tools such as spell checkers and gamified spelling platforms, to provide interactive reinforcement. Besides that, repeated exposure to correctly spelled words in reading passages, as well as frequent writing exercises, will also help students internalize English spelling.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that spelling errors in students' narrative writing consisted of nine types of errors. Those were omission of letter, addition of letter, single letter instead of double letter, double letter instead of single letter, substitution of letter, interchange of two adjacent letters, error involving an apostrophe (segmentation error), and multiple errors. The most frequent type of error was omission, with 50 cases (21.1%), which indicates that students struggle with English spelling, especially due to the inconsistency between pronunciation and written forms. The result of this study provides insights into the existing literature by revealing spelling challenges Indonesian EFL learners face, especially in narrative writing, using the classification of spelling errors by Bestgen and Granger (2011). Teachers may employ the study's findings to map out their students' spelling errors when they write narrative texts. As a result, this raises the possibility of discussing ways to address students' writing difficulties, particularly in terms of spelling.

The findings suggest that teachers should design interventions to address students' spelling difficulty by integrating structured spelling exercises, contrastive analysis between Bahasa Indonesia and the English writing system, incorporating digital



platforms for spelling into their teaching, as well as increasing reading exposure to students to improve their spelling competence. Curriculum designers and policymakers can also use these insights to design English lessons that specifically address this challenge, such as instruction that focuses on reading and writing for students. Lastly, future research can develop into this topic by delving more into the cause of the errors and teachers' strategies, especially at different educational levels, to better identify developmental patterns in spelling acquisition. Besides that, future research can also investigate the role of digital tools such as spell-checkers or digital spelling games as an intervention to spelling errors to provide insights into the use of technology in spelling instruction, especially in the EFL context.

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