

The Most Common Mistake in Constructing Procedure Text about Food and Beverage

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the most common mistakes made by tenth-grade culinary students in constructing procedure text about food and beverages. The aim is to identify students' challenges in applying appropriate linguistic features and sentence structures. A descriptive qualitative method was used, with data collected through students' written texts, classroom observations, and interviews. The results show that many students faced difficulties in constructing imperative sentences, using action verbs correctly, and organizing steps using adverbials of sequence. Errors also appeared in the use of adjectives, nouns, and conjunctions. These issues affected the clarity and cohesion of their texts. Observations revealed that students often relied on literal translation from their first language, while interviews indicated confusion about grammatical rules and limited vocabulary. These findings highlight the need for more explicit teaching on language features and text structure in procedure writing. The study suggests that targeted instruction and practice can help students improve their sentence construction skills and produce more effective procedural texts.

1. Introduction

Writing is a fundamental skill in English language learning that plays a crucial role in both academic and professional settings. As a productive language skill, writing requires a solid understanding of grammatical structures and appropriate vocabulary selection, as well as the ability to organize ideas coherently and systematically [1], [2]. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), developing writing proficiency presents unique challenges for students, as they must adapt to linguistic conventions that differ significantly from those of their native language. Writing proficiency is essential not only for academic success but also for effective communication in the professional world, where clarity, accuracy, and coherence are fundamental components of effective discourse [3].

In Vocational High Schools (SMK), writing proficiency holds particular significance as students are prepared to meet the demands of the real-world workforce. Students are expected to develop their writing skills across various genres of writing [4]. Genre refers to forms of writing and expressive speech that facilitate human interaction, communication, and cooperation [5]. One of the primary text types introduced in the vocational curriculum is the

procedure text, which serves as an instructional guide presenting systematic and logical steps to complete a task [6]. A procedure text is a written format that provides instructions on how to perform a task through a series of sequential steps [7]. Procedure texts typically feature a structure comprising a goal or aim, a list of materials or equipment, and the procedural steps. For instance, in the culinary field, students must be able to write procedure texts that provide clear, precise instructions regarding cooking techniques, ingredient preparation, and safety protocols [8]. Poorly constructed procedure texts can lead to misinterpretation, inefficiency, and errors in the production process, ultimately affecting food quality and operational effectiveness [9]. Given the importance of writing procedural texts, instruction in vocational high schools (SMK) should emphasize text structure, grammatical accuracy, and logical sequencing to ensure students can communicate procedural information effectively and professionally.

Despite this importance, vocational students still struggle to write procedural texts that meet both academic and industry expectations. They are required to use language accurately and confidently whether writing clear technical instructions, describing complex procedures, or delivering persuasive demonstrations [10]. Previous research has identified common

challenges regarding the use of adverbs of sequence and imperative sentences, as well as the maintenance of cohesion and coherence. These difficulties highlight the gap between expected writing competence and students' actual proficiency levels. Furthermore, linguistic interference from Indonesian to English contributes to grammatical errors, sentence fragments, and lexical inconsistencies in student writing [11], [12]. A lack of structured writing practice and insufficient targeted feedback from instructors exacerbates these challenges, thus limiting students' ability to improve their writing skills [13], [14].

Various studies have examined the challenges students face when writing procedural texts. Some researchers have highlighted students' difficulties in applying linguistic structures, noting recurring errors regarding tense usage, sequence connectors, and imperative sentence constructions [15], [16]. Similarly, other studies have identified grammatical errors in procedural texts, finding that students struggle with the correct use of singular and plural nouns an indication of fundamental gaps in their understanding of English grammar [17]. Research into overall writing proficiency has shown that while students may excel in vocabulary usage, they encounter obstacles regarding structural aspects such as sentence coherence and mechanical accuracy, including punctuation and spelling [18], [19]. Although these studies offer valuable insights into common linguistic errors, their primary focus remains on grammar, without examining the broader cognitive, instructional, and industry-related factors that influence students' ability to write procedural texts effectively.

Despite extensive research on writing challenges within the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context, studies specifically addressing procedural text writing in vocational education particularly within culinary arts programs remain limited. Previous research has generally employed quantitative methodologies focused on identifying and classifying errors, rather than exploring the underlying causes of students' writing difficulties. Furthermore, few studies have examined how factors such as a lack of structured feedback, industry-specific writing expectations, and pedagogical interventions impact students' ability to produce well-structured procedural texts.

This study aims to address this gap by conducting a qualitative analysis of students' writing difficulties, considering not only linguistic errors but also the pedagogical and cognitive aspects contributing to these challenges. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on error analysis, this research emphasizes the factors influencing students' ability to organize and convey information within procedural texts. Furthermore, given that prior research has not adequately addressed the practical implications of procedural text writing for the career readiness of

vocational students, this study aims to highlight the importance of mastering this text type for students' professional competence particularly in the culinary industry, where clear written instructions are crucial to workplace practice. By addressing these challenges, the study offers new insights into the instructional strategies needed to enhance procedural text writing skills among vocational students.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the procedural text writing abilities of vocational students, identify common linguistic and structural challenges, and explore the underlying cognitive and instructional factors contributing to these difficulties. Additionally, the study seeks to propose pedagogical strategies to improve writing skills in a manner that aligns with both academic demands and industry needs. By providing a comprehensive understanding of the writing challenges students face, this research aims to contribute to the development of more effective, industry-oriented teaching methodologies, thereby better preparing vocational students for workplace communication. The findings will offer valuable insights for vocational curriculum development and present practical recommendations to bridge the gap between classroom learning and professional writing expectations.

2. Research Method

A descriptive qualitative approach was employed to explore the writing skills of tenth-grade Culinary Arts students at SMKN 9 Padang in composing procedural texts. This method is highly suitable for examining naturally occurring challenges without manipulating variables [20]. By applying this approach, the study investigated the specific difficulties students faced while drafting procedural texts and identified patterns of linguistic and structural errors. Furthermore, this approach provided in-depth insight into the factors shaping students' writing abilities within a vocational education setting. The study was conducted at SMKN 9 Padang, involving 32 tenth-grade Culinary Arts students selected through purposive sampling. This sample size was deemed sufficient to allow for detailed qualitative analysis while ensuring adequate data representation across various levels of writing proficiency.

To obtain comprehensive and reliable data and to enhance the validity of the findings, source triangulation and methodological triangulation were applied. Source triangulation involved comparing data from document analysis, observations, and interviews to ensure consistency, while methodological triangulation utilized multiple instruments to minimize bias and strengthen the study's credibility [20]. The linguistic aspects of the procedural texts were analyzed using a grammatical framework focusing on imperative sentences, adverbs of sequence, action verbs, conjunctions, adjectives, and nouns [21]. This method

identified frequently occurring grammatical and structural errors. Through an ongoing analysis of students' writing challenges, this study contributes to the development of effective instructional strategies in vocational education, particularly in enhancing procedural text writing skills to meet both academic and industry standards.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Students' Common Mistakes in Procedure Text

The analysis of students' common mistake in constructing procedure text based on written text

Table 1. Common Mistake Found in Students' Procedure Text

Type of Mistake	Type of Mistake
Grammatical errors	Incorrect verb forms, subject-verb disagreement, incorrect tense usage
Vocabulary Errors	Inappropriate, vague, or incorrect vocabulary choices
Sentence Structure Errors	Run-on sentences, fragments, and improper punctuation
Spelling Error	Misspellings that impact readability
Incorrect Use of Sequencing Words	Misusing or omission of sequence markers like "then" and "after that"

The dominant mistake found was grammatical errors. Students often misused verb forms and tenses, failing to apply the imperative form necessary for procedure text. Errors in subject-verb agreement were also observed. For example, Student MJ wrote, boiled water, when it's boiling, put the noodles into the pan, instead of the correct form, "Boil the water, and when is boils, put the noodles into the pan". Vocabulary errors also appeared quite often. Some students used inappropriate words of phrase that did not fit the context, making the meaning less precise. An example can be seen in ready the serve, which should have been ready to serve. This shows that some students still have difficulties selecting the correct vocabulary needed in procedure writing. Student SPR wrote "put coffee into it," which is insufficiently specific. Student LFA wrote "one spoon of coffee," which unnecessarily combines a number with an article.

Errors in sentence structure are also clearly evident. Some students wrote run-on sentences or sentence fragments lacking complete ideas, while punctuation errors made the text difficult to comprehend. For instance, in the phrase "pour the ice cup and mixed" written by Student MC, the intended action is unclear due to missing words and faulty grammar. Spelling

analysis and classroom observation, revealed several common mistakes, particularly in the use of language features typical procedure text such as action verb, adjectives, adverb of sequence, conjunctions, nouns, and imperative sentences. During the observation, the teacher assigned four procedure writing topics: How to Make Fried Egg, How to Make Sweet Iced Tea, How to Cook Instant Noodles and How to Make a Cup of Coffee. The common errors found in the students' procedural texts are presented in Table 1.

errors represent another common issue; examples include misspellings of words such as "kettle", "firstly", and "secondly" in the writings of Students MC, SA, ASI, and SPR. Although spelling errors might seem trivial, they affect the clarity and flow of the text, and frequent errors can distract the reader from the content itself.

In addition, some students had trouble with sequencing. They often forgot to use linking words such as then, after that, or next, which made the steps seem disconnected. Without proper sequence markers, readers might struggle to understand the order of the instructions. These findings suggest that students need more practice and support in using correct grammar, choosing appropriate vocabulary, structuring sentences, spelling words accurately, and organizing ideas logically. By focusing on these areas, students can improve their ability to write better and more effective procedure text.

3.2. Students' Challenges in Writing Procedure Text

Based on interviews and classroom observations, several challenges faced by students when writing procedural texts were identified; these are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Challenges in Constructing Procedure Text

Type of Mistake	Type of Mistake
Limited vocabulary mastery	Difficulty choosing precise words related to ingredients and steps
Lack of grammatical knowledge	Uncertainty in verb forms and sentence structure
Lack of confidence	Anxiety and self-doubt when writing in English
Lack of Practice	Limited exposure and writing practice in creating procedure text

The analysis of interview results revealed several challenges faced by students in writing procedure texts. One of the most prominent issues was limited vocabulary mastery and word choice. Word choice is an essential aspect that writers carefully think about when composing a text [22]. Many students expressed difficulty in selecting accurate and specific words related to ingredients, tools, and cooking processes.

Instead of using precise terms like whisk, boil, or stir, they often relied on vague expressions such as thing or do it, which led to confusion in conveying the instructions clearly.

Another challenge is a lack of grammatical understanding. Students struggle to construct sentences using the imperative form, a crucial element in

procedural texts. Errors such as incorrect verb usage, subject-verb disagreement, and inconsistent tense usage frequently appear in their writing. These grammatical weaknesses disrupt the flow of instructions and make the steps harder to follow. Three students (AP, IPP, and CA) reported difficulty writing imperative sentences without guidance; AP stated, "I still need the teacher's help." In contrast, SG responded confidently, "Yes, it is easy for me." When asked about the clarity and logical order of the steps, CA said, "I couldn't do it well due to limited vocabulary," whereas SG commented, "Yes, I could." Similarly, AP, IPP, and CA faced difficulties with adverbs of sequence, unlike SG, who found them easy.

Lack of confidence also emerged as a significant factor. Some students admitted feeling anxious when writing in English, worrying about making mistakes. This anxiety often resulted in overly simple or incomplete sentences, limiting their ability to fully explain the procedure. The fear of being incorrect appeared to inhibit their willingness to experiment with more complex structures or richer vocabulary.

Additionally, it was found that students still heavily relied on translating directly from Indonesian to English when composing their texts. Based on the classroom observation, students were provided with examples of procedure text and tasked with translating and constructing their own. The process began with Bahasa Indonesia draft and was later translated into English, which helped scaffold their understanding but also introduced translation-related errors. In discussing action verbs on the interview section, AP mentioned, I need it to be translated into my mother language. This translation process often produced stiff and unnatural sentences, as Indonesian sentence patterns and expressions do not always align smoothly with English conventions. Because of this, students' writing tended to sound rigid and awkward, further impacting the clarity and natural flow of their procedure texts.

Due to these challenges, students still require substantial guidance from their teachers during the writing process. Teacher support is necessary not only to correct linguistic errors but also to model natural English usage, encourage more authentic sentence construction, and gradually build students' independence in writing. Furthermore, a lack of practice contributed to students' difficulties. Many students stated that they had few opportunities to engage in writing activities specifically focused on procedure texts. Based on the classroom observation, the teacher predominantly used traditional instruction techniques, such as whiteboard explanations and verbal guidance. While effective in delivering structured content, the lack of media or interactive materials limited student stimulation. As a result, they were unfamiliar with the text structure, such as organizing

steps logically and using sequence markers like first, then, and finally appropriately.

These challenges indicate that students require more structured and consistent exposure to writing practice, targeted vocabulary enrichment, grammar reinforcement, and confidence-building activities. Addressing these areas in the classroom could help students improve not only their ability to write coherent procedure texts but also their overall English writing competence.

3.3. Discussion

The findings of this research offer valuable insights into students' writing ability, particularly in constructing sentences for procedure text. Among the language skills, writing is regarded as one of the most difficult for students to master, as it involves a complicated process and demands the use of sophisticated structures [23]. One important benefit that emerges is the clearer understanding of students' common mistakes, such as forming imperative sentences and selecting precise vocabulary. These insights are crucial for informing better teaching practices in writing classes. The students' frequent errors in constructing imperative sentences, for example, highlight the need for more explicit instruction on language features specific to procedure text. Through this, students can develop a stronger grasp of the text's functional language, ultimately improving the clarity and coherence of their instructions.

Moreover, the vocabulary limitations observed suggest that writing instruction should incorporate more focused vocabulary-building activities. That teachers must also create creative exercises to stimulate students' interest in learning English, especially to refresh their minds and help them better memorize and retain vocabulary [24]. This aligns with the researchers' findings that a richer vocabulary enables students to convey instructions more precisely [25], [26]. Understanding this benefit, teachers can design targeted vocabulary enrichment programs that align with the typical needs of procedural writing, helping students articulate their ideas more accurately and with greater confidence.

Another valuable outcome of this study is the insight it provides into the role of teaching methods in the development of students' writing abilities. The conventional teaching style observed, although clearly delivered, appears to be inadequate in developing independent writing skills. Research supports the use of more interactive, process-oriented teaching methods [1], [27]. It is also emphasized that some students may struggle to articulate their ideas [28]. Given this, teachers are encouraged to implement more engaging strategies, such as peer feedback sessions, collaborative writing projects, and structured writing exercises that

gradually build student independence. These methods can make learning more meaningful and empower students to take greater control of their writing process.

Additionally, the students' perceptions gathered from interviews indicated the importance of ongoing support and scaffolding. Even though students find the teacher's explanations helpful, their reliance on assistance suggests a need for more gradual release of responsibility. By recognizing this, educators can implement step-by-step support strategies that foster students' confidence and independence over time. Moreover, the students' writing ability is significantly influenced by teaching approaches and self-confidence [29]. This highlights the importance of using instructional methods that not only deliver content effectively but also build learners' self-assurance.

Comparing these findings to previous research further strengthens the validity of these implications. While consistent with earlier studies regarding grammatical and coherence issues, this research also reveals a unique strength: students' clear understanding of the purpose of procedure text [15]. This advantage can be built upon, helping teachers shift focus from general comprehension to more technical aspects of writing, such as sentence structure and vocabulary use [30]. That students' weak grasp of basic grammar rules, mainly due to ineffective teaching methods and low student engagement. Addressing the specific challenges uncovered in this study particularly in imperative sentence construction, vocabulary enrichment, and student engagement enables teachers to better support students in developing the skills necessary for writing coherent, precise, and functional procedure text. The findings offer valuable insights into areas for improvement and present a clear pathway for enhancing writing instruction in vocational school settings.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the primary challenges encountered by culinary students of vocational high school in constructing procedure text lies in constructing grammatically and structurally appropriate sentences. The most frequent errors identified include the misuse of imperative verbs, incorrect sentence structures, and the inappropriate sequencing of procedural steps. These findings reveal that although students demonstrate an awareness of the general format of procedure text, they often lack the linguistic accuracy and syntactic competence required to produce effective instructional writing. The research underscores the importance of reinforcing students' understanding of action verbs, grammatical cohesion and transitional signals within procedural discourse. As a pedagogical implication, the findings suggest the necessity of implementing more focused instructional strategies that explicitly address these linguistics components. This research contributes to the ongoing

discourse in ELT writing pedagogy and offers empirical evidence for educators aiming to enhance learners' ability to construct coherent and accurate procedure text in vocational context.

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