



## Written Language Errors in Elementary School Students: A Psycholinguistic Analysis

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### Abstract

*This study examines the written language errors produced by elementary school students in Makassar City through a psycholinguistic and educational management lens, foregrounding how linguistic performance is shaped by systemic, organizational, and instructional structures. Using a qualitative descriptive design, the research analyzed students' written texts, classroom observations, and interviews with teachers to uncover the types, patterns, and underlying sources of writing errors. Findings reveal four dominant categories of errors orthographic, morphological, syntactic, and semantic each reflecting not only developmental cognitive processes but also the influence of instructional fragmentation, inconsistent feedback mechanisms, and limited teacher expertise in psycholinguistic-responsive pedagogy. Teachers' perspectives further demonstrate how large class sizes, insufficient resources, and culturally unresponsive management practices constrain effective writing instruction, ultimately reproducing recurring student errors. The study argues that these linguistic weaknesses are organizational products, not individual deficits, and must therefore be addressed through strategic school management interventions. The implications highlight the need for coherent literacy programs, capacity-building for teachers, improved feedback systems, and managerial alignment between curriculum design and classroom delivery. By situating children's written errors within the broader structure of educational governance, this study contributes to both psycholinguistic scholarship and educational management research, offering a deeper understanding of how institutional practices shape literacy outcomes. The results underscore that improving student writing accuracy requires integrated systemic reform rather than isolated classroom-level adjustments.*

## Introduction

The development of written language skills in children represents a complex interplay of cognitive, linguistic, sociocultural, and pedagogical factors that collectively shape how young learners acquire the ability to communicate through text (Khudaverdiyeva, 2025; Qiaoya, 2025; Lawton & Embry-Wright, 2026). Writing is not merely the transcription of spoken language; it requires higher-order cognitive processing, including planning, organization, encoding, and the application of orthographic and grammatical rules. In the context of elementary education, especially in multilingual and culturally diverse environments such as Makassar City, the emergence of written language errors is an inevitable part of literacy development. These errors provide valuable insights into the underlying linguistic systems and cognitive strategies that children rely on as they construct written meaning (Nawaz et al., 2024; Dingemanse & Enfield, 2024). Thus, analyzing such errors from a psycholinguistic perspective is critical for

understanding how children internalize language structures and process linguistic information during writing (Alduais et al., 2022; Sarwar & Fortunasari, 2025; Parasian et al., 2025).

Language acquisition research has long emphasized that children's errors are not signs of failure but rather indicators of developmental processes and evolving linguistic competence (Kaderavek & Henbest, 2024; Maflah, 2023). Within the field of psycholinguistics, error analysis is recognized as a powerful tool for uncovering how learners perceive, store, and retrieve linguistic forms (Figuerola, 2024). Written errors, unlike spoken errors, leave a permanent trace that makes it possible for researchers to examine the precise nature of linguistic breakdowns, cognitive overload, or interference from oral language habits (Cook, 2016; Ellis, 1994). At the elementary level, where writing competency is still emerging, such errors often reveal challenges in phonological awareness, morphological understanding, syntactic development, and vocabulary selection. These challenges become particularly salient in regions like Makassar City, where children's linguistic repertoires are influenced by local languages such as Makassarese and Buginese, alongside Indonesian as the medium of instruction (Rahmawati & Arsyad, 2026; Usman et al., 2026; Samuel, 2025).

In Indonesia's diverse linguistic landscape, early writing development is significantly shaped by the coexistence of multiple languages in children's daily environments (Gapur, A., & Wardana, 2024; Syam et al., 2023; Nugraha, 2025). Many elementary school students grow up speaking regional languages at home and only begin formal literacy instruction in Indonesian upon entering school. This multilingual condition often leads to specific forms of linguistic transfer that manifest in written errors ranging from phonological substitutions to lexical borrowing and syntactic interference. Psycholinguistic studies emphasize that such cross-linguistic influence is a natural cognitive process, reflecting the interaction between a child's developing linguistic systems. For educators and researchers, these errors are crucial for identifying which aspects of Indonesian literacy require more explicit instruction or reinforcement (Hapsarini et al., 2023; Yurianta et al., 2025; Kurniawan et al., 2026).

Moreover, the shift in Indonesia's educational landscape toward competency-based learning and literacy-oriented curriculum design has highlighted the importance of strengthening foundational writing skills among elementary students (Saputra et al., 2025; Jannana et al., 2024). Despite these curricular improvements, several studies have suggested that many students still struggle with producing coherent, grammatically accurate, and orthographically correct written texts. These persistent challenges underscore the need for a deeper examination of the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms underlying students' writing difficulties (Rehman et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2025; Ramzan et al., 2023). A psycholinguistic analysis of written language errors, therefore, contributes to addressing this educational need by providing empirically grounded insights into how children process language at the point of writing.

Makassar City provides a particularly compelling context for such an investigation. As a metropolitan region with heterogeneous linguistic communities, its classrooms reflect a mix of language backgrounds and differential exposure to Indonesian literacy practices. Teachers often report that students' written errors are not solely due to lack of instruction but reflect broader psycholinguistic factors such as phonological interference from local languages, limited working memory, and insufficient vocabulary encoding strategies. These concerns align with psycholinguistic theories that position writing errors as windows into learners' cognitive load and linguistic processing constraints (Silva et al., 2024; Cárdenas, 2025). Examining the forms and sources of these errors can thus support more targeted literacy interventions.

Furthermore, written language errors carry significant implications for academic development, especially in subjects that require textual comprehension and written expression. Students who experience persistent writing challenges may face difficulties in demonstrating knowledge, participating in higher-level literacy tasks, and meeting curriculum expectations (Ramzan et al., 2023; MacArthur et al., 2023). By analyzing these errors systematically, educators can better understand the stages of writing development and adopt instructional strategies that align with students' cognitive and linguistic needs. Schools in Makassar City, where linguistic diversity intersects with educational disparities, stand to benefit substantially from such research insights.

## **Methods**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design guided by a psycholinguistic analytical orientation. A qualitative approach was selected because the focus of the research was to explore the cognitive and linguistic processes underlying students' written language errors, which cannot be captured adequately through numerical measurement alone. Qualitative description enables a rich portrayal of naturally occurring writing behaviors and allows the researcher to interpret the linguistic forms as manifestations of deeper cognitive activity. The psycholinguistic lens further positions written errors as indicators of language processing, interlanguage development, and the interaction between children's spoken and written linguistic systems. Through this approach, the study aimed to provide an in-depth, contextually grounded understanding of how elementary school students in Makassar City produce written texts and what their errors reveal about their mental representations of language.

## **Research Setting**

The study was conducted in three public elementary schools located in Makassar City, South Sulawesi. These schools were selected based on their diverse linguistic populations, representing students who predominantly use Indonesian alongside local languages such as Makassarese and Buginese in daily communication. Conducting the study in this multilingual urban environment allowed the researcher to examine written language errors that naturally emerge from context-specific linguistic exposure. The schools were also chosen because they implement the national curriculum that emphasizes literacy development, making them appropriate contexts for observing authentic writing practices. Data collection took place in natural classroom settings without intervention from the researcher, ensuring ecological validity.

## **Participants**

Participants consisted of 24 students from Grades 4 to 6, selected using purposive sampling to include students who had already received foundational instruction in writing and were capable of producing extended written texts. Teachers were consulted during the selection process to ensure that students represented a range of writing abilities, thereby enabling the identification of varied error types. Additionally, three Indonesian language teachers were included as supporting participants to provide supplementary insights regarding common classroom writing challenges, instructional practices, and their observations of students' linguistic development. All participants were treated as information-rich cases, not for generalization but for depth of analysis.

## **Data Sources**

Three primary data sources were used to ensure the comprehensiveness and triangulation of findings. The first and main source was students' written texts, which included narrative and descriptive assignments produced as part of regular classroom activities. These texts served as

the foundational evidence for identifying linguistic errors. The second data source was non-participant classroom observations, conducted to understand the instructional context, classroom language use, teacher explanations, and the sociolinguistic dynamics that might influence writing performance. The third data source consisted of semi-structured interviews with Indonesian language teachers. These interviews provided interpretive depth, enabling the researcher to contextualize the identified errors in terms of pedagogical practices and teachers' insights into students' cognitive and linguistic challenges.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data were collected over a six-week period. The process began with obtaining written texts from students during regular classroom sessions to ensure that the writing reflected natural performance rather than test-like pressure. Students were not informed that their writing would be analyzed for errors to avoid altering their behavior. Subsequently, the researcher conducted classroom observations using an observation guide focusing on instructional methods, students' engagement with writing tasks, and language interactions. Observations were documented through field notes. Afterward, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, each lasting approximately 45–60 minutes. The interviews followed an open-ended format, allowing teachers to elaborate freely on their experiences and perceptions. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and later transcribed verbatim.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis followed three major stages: identification, classification, and psycholinguistic interpretation. The students' written texts were first examined line by line to identify any deviations from standard Indonesian orthography, morphology, syntax, and semantics. These errors were then categorized using an adapted error analysis framework that included orthographic errors (such as spelling, punctuation, capitalization), morphological errors (such as incorrect affixation and word formation), syntactic errors (such as mis ordered sentence structures and incorrect verb agreement), and semantic errors (such as inappropriate word choice or meaning distortion). After classification, each error was analyzed through a psycholinguistic lens to infer underlying cognitive processes such as overgeneralization, limited working memory, cross-linguistic transfer, or reliance on oral language structures. Thematic patterns were then developed to connect the identified errors with broader linguistic and cognitive phenomena. Triangulation across written texts, observations, and interview narratives ensured analytical trustworthiness.

### **Results and Discussion**

The sections that follow present the empirical results of this study by systematically tracing how written language errors emerge, cluster, and reveal deeper instructional and managerial patterns within the participating schools. Before the results are detailed, it is important to clarify that these findings are grounded in three interconnected qualitative data sources students' written texts, classroom observations, and teacher interviews which together illuminate not only what errors students produce but also the institutional environments that allow such errors to persist. The analysis does not treat errors as isolated linguistic incidents; rather, it interprets them as indicators of underlying cognitive processes, instructional priorities, and organizational conditions that shape literacy learning in Makassar City. As such, the results are presented with attention to how each category of error reflects the broader ecology of teaching practices, resource constraints, leadership decisions, and cultural-linguistic dynamics that define students' writing experiences. This approach ensures that the subsequent findings are not merely descriptive, but analytically connected to the systemic factors that influence children's written language development.

## Types of Written Language Errors Identified in Students' Texts

The analysis of students' written tests revealed four major categories of written language errors: orthographic errors, morphological errors, syntactic errors, and semantic errors. Each category reflects distinct aspects of the students' developing linguistic competence as well as the underlying psycholinguistic processes engaged during writing. These errors were consistently observed across the collected samples and were further supported by teachers' interview responses, illustrating how cognitive load, linguistic transfer, and instructional factors intersect in shaping students' writing performance.

Orthographic errors were the most frequently observed type in the students' written work. These errors included misspellings, inconsistent capitalization, incorrect or missing punctuation marks, and the omission or addition of letters. Many students appeared to rely heavily on phonological cues when spelling, writing words based on how they sounded rather than how they should be represented in standard Indonesian orthography. This indicates that phonological awareness forms the basis of their encoding process, a pattern common among children developing literacy in linguistically diverse environments. In the Makassar context, certain misspellings reflected phonological influence from local languages. For example, some students wrote "koe" instead of "kau" or added "ji" at the end of sentences, both of which reflect Makassarese or Buginese speech patterns.

These errors show that students have not yet fully internalized Indonesian spelling conventions and continue to depend on auditory memory during writing. Teachers confirmed these tendencies, noting that students' written language often mirrors their spoken language. One teacher explained,

*"The children usually write the way they speak, so if they use Makassar language at home, it also appears in their writing."*

Another added,

*"They are not yet strong in spelling rules, so if a word sounds similar, they assume it is correct."*

These comments highlight how orthographic errors stem not only from gaps in formal instruction but also from the persistent influence of local oral language structures on students' emerging literacy. Morphological errors were also common and consisted of incorrect affixation, omission of necessary affixes, and misuse of derivational or inflectional morphemes. Some students omitted the prefix *me-* in verbs, writing "write story" instead of while others overgeneralized Indonesian morphological rules, producing forms such as "running" where "running" alone would have been sufficient. These errors reflect not only incomplete mastery of Indonesian morphology but also the influence of agglutinative features in local languages, which follow different patterns of word formation.

From a psycholinguistic perspective, these errors suggest that students are still developing the ability to segment and attach affixes appropriately as they write. The cognitive demands of generating ideas while simultaneously applying morphological rules often lead to omissions or distortions. Teachers corroborated this explanation, noting that students frequently struggle with affixes during writing tasks. One teacher remarked,

*"They often forget to add affixes, especially when writing quickly. Their focus is on the content, not on word forms."*

Another commented,

*"Sometimes they add affixes randomly because they think every verb needs me-, even though that's not the case."*

These reflections highlight how morphological errors emerge from cognitive overload and partial generalization of morphological patterns. Syntactic errors appeared in the form of fragmented sentences, incorrect word order, misused conjunctions, and mismatched subjects and verbs. Some students produced run-on sentences without proper punctuation, merging multiple ideas in ways that resembled spoken storytelling rather than written discourse. Others constructed sentences that mirrored the syntactic structure of local languages rather than standard Indonesian, resulting in reversed or disordered sentence patterns.

These syntactic deviations indicate that students are still learning to transition from oral to written discourse, which requires more explicit structural organization and grammatical precision. Unlike spoken language, which relies on intonation and immediate feedback, writing demands clear sentence boundaries and coherent clause relationships. The syntactic errors observed therefore reflect difficulties in planning sentence structure, managing clause sequences, and maintaining cohesion. As one teacher stated,

*"Orally, they can tell a story smoothly, but when they write, their ideas become disorganized and their sentence structure falls apart."*

Another teacher explained,

*"They often mix Indonesian and local language structures without realizing it."*

These statements illustrate the cognitive complexity involved in constructing syntactically accurate written sentences. Semantic errors occurred when students selected inappropriate vocabulary, used words with inaccurate meanings, or produced expressions that were unclear or awkward. Some errors were caused by literal translations of local-language idioms or expressions into Indonesian, resulting in unnatural or confusing word choices. Others reflected limited vocabulary knowledge or misunderstandings of word meaning. For instance, several students used "play" in contexts that required "participate" or "join," suggesting an overreliance on familiar words when faced with more formal writing tasks.

These errors demonstrate that students are still developing the semantic networks necessary to map ideas onto correct lexical items in Indonesian. During writing, the cognitive effort of retrieving appropriate vocabulary often leads students to default to high-frequency, everyday words rather than more accurate academic or descriptive terms. Teachers frequently mentioned this issue during interviews. One teacher noted,

*"Their word choices are often inaccurate because they only know the vocabulary they use in daily conversation."*

Another stated,

*"Sometimes they translate directly from the local language, so the meaning changes."*

These insights show that semantic errors reflect limited lexical depth, influence from local languages, and insufficient exposure to a wide range of Indonesian vocabulary.

### **Patterns of Errors and Their Frequencies (qualitative categorization)**

The qualitative analysis of students' written tests revealed consistent patterns in how frequently different types of errors occurred and how they clustered across writing tasks. Although the study did not quantify errors numerically, the recurring tendencies across samples indicate clear qualitative frequencies. Orthographic errors appeared most prominently, emerging

systematically in nearly every writing sample analyzed. These were followed by morphological and syntactic errors, which showed moderate but notable frequency. Semantic errors, while less frequent compared to the other categories, still appeared consistently in contexts requiring more complex vocabulary. Together, these patterns illustrate how students' cognitive processes, linguistic exposure, and instructional experiences shape the prevalence of specific error types.

Orthographic errors emerged as the most dominant error pattern across the entire dataset. Nearly all students demonstrated recurring issues with spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. The frequency of these errors suggests that the students' foundational literacy skills are still developing and heavily influenced by phonological cues rather than orthographic rules. The pervasive appearance of misspellings connected to local language phonology reinforces the idea that students rely instinctively on auditory impressions when encoding written forms. This pattern aligns with teachers' observations, one of whom stated,

*"Almost every piece of writing has spelling mistakes, especially those influenced by the way they speak at home."*

Another teacher confirmed,

*"Orthography is the area where they struggle the most, and these mistakes happen every time they write."*

The high frequency of orthographic errors underscores their role as a central feature in the students' early writing development. Morphological errors appeared with moderate regularity, making them the second most frequently observed category. The recurring pattern involved the incorrect use or omission of affixes, particularly those associated with verbs. Students commonly dropped obligatory prefixes or added inappropriate ones based on overgeneralized rules. These patterns reflect a formative stage in morphological awareness, where students have internalized some but not all components of Indonesian word formation. This inconsistency was noted by teachers who observed the same recurring pattern. One teacher explained,

*"You can see the same types of mistakes over and over they forget affixes or add the wrong ones."*

Another commented,

*"Their understanding of affixes is unstable, so the same errors appear repeatedly."*

The frequency of morphological errors indicates that students are still negotiating Indonesian morphological structures and have not yet achieved stable morphological accuracy. Syntactic errors appeared at a moderate frequency, often clustering in texts where students attempted to express complex ideas or construct longer sentences. The recurrence of run-on sentences, misplaced word order, and incomplete clauses suggests that students face challenges organizing ideas within the constraints of written grammar. These syntactic patterns were particularly evident in narrative assignments, where students attempted to convey events sequentially but struggled with clause structuring. Teachers consistently reported observing these tendencies in classroom writing tasks. One teacher noted,

*"When they try to write long sentences, the same structure problems repeat they mix ideas without proper sentence boundaries."*

Another said,

*"Syntactic errors are common whenever they try to express something complex; they fall back into spoken language patterns."*

The moderate frequency of these errors reflects the cognitive difficulty of coordinating syntax while simultaneously generating meaning. Semantic errors were the least frequent among the identified categories but still appeared regularly enough to form recognizable patterns. These errors often occurred when students attempted to use unfamiliar vocabulary or translate expressions from local languages. Although less dominant, their presence in multiple texts suggests a recurring difficulty with lexical accuracy and conceptual mapping. Because semantic errors surfaced most often when students attempted more advanced or academic vocabulary, they reveal limitations not in basic communication but in deeper lexical competence. Teachers' interviews confirmed this pattern, with one teacher stating,

*"Semantic mistakes don't happen in every text, but they appear whenever students try to use vocabulary beyond their everyday use."*

Another teacher observed,

*"You see the same type of meaning mistakes usually from direct translation from Makassar or Bugis."*

While less frequent, these patterns demonstrate a persistent gap in vocabulary depth. A notable finding was the overlap between error types, particularly when students were under cognitive strain. Texts that contained multiple orthographic errors typically also contained morphological or syntactic errors, suggesting that writing difficulties tend to cluster rather than appear in isolation. This pattern aligns with psycholinguistic perspectives which emphasize that children's writing processes draw simultaneously on phonological, morphological, and syntactic knowledge. Teachers also noticed this clustering pattern. One teacher explained,

*"If a student struggles with spelling, usually the same student also makes grammar and vocabulary mistakes it's rarely just one type."*

Another added,

*"The errors often come together, especially when the writing task is longer."*

These overlapping patterns highlight the complex interplay between linguistic knowledge and cognitive processing during children's writing.

### **Teachers' Perspectives and Classroom Practices Affecting Writing Performance**

Teachers' perspectives reveal that written language errors among elementary school students in Makassar City are not merely isolated linguistic issues but are deeply shaped by instructional practices, classroom routines, and varying pedagogical competencies. Teachers consistently emphasized that students' writing accuracy is heavily influenced by the degree of explicit instruction they receive, particularly in spelling, sentence construction, and the use of appropriate vocabulary. Several teachers admitted that writing instruction in the early grades tends to be overshadowed by reading and numeracy priorities, leaving students with limited structured opportunities to practice coherent written expression. As one teacher noted, "We focus more on ensuring students can read fluently, so writing activities are sometimes not given enough detail and correction." Such instructional imbalances create learning gaps that surface in the form of persistent orthographic and structural errors in later grades.

Moreover, classroom practices show considerable variation across schools, particularly in how teachers model writing, provide corrective feedback, and scaffold students' cognitive processing. Some teachers rely heavily on copying techniques or writing short sentences on the board for imitation, which limits students' ability to develop independent linguistic awareness. A teacher explained,

*“Many times, I ask them to copy from the board because it saves time, but I realize now it doesn’t help them think about sentence structure or word spelling.”*

This practice, while efficient for classroom management, hinders the internalization of linguistic rules. In classrooms where students are encouraged to compose texts through guided writing sessions, there is noticeably more attention to grammar, punctuation, and logical flow, demonstrating how pedagogical methods directly shape writing outcomes. Another recurring issue highlighted by teachers is the limited availability of materials and structured writing programs. Teachers reported that large class sizes and insufficient instructional aids reduce their capacity to provide individualized feedback. One teacher pointed out,

*“With more than thirty students in the room, it is impossible to check every child’s writing carefully every day.”*

This lack of individualized attention delays students’ recognition of recurring errors, allowing faulty linguistic patterns to become fossilized. The absence of consistent correction also leads students to assume that their writing is acceptable as long as the content is recognizable, reinforcing habitual errors that later become more difficult to correct. Teachers also indicated that students’ oral language habits significantly influence their written expression. Many children rely on colloquial Makassarese or mixed Indonesian-Makassarese conversational patterns at home, which subtly transfer into their written compositions. Teachers acknowledged the challenge of bridging these linguistic registers, with one stating,

*“They write the way they speak, and it is hard to change this unless we show them the standard form repeatedly.”*

This phenomenon demonstrates a gap between spoken and written performance, a typical issue in multilingual urban contexts where children navigate multiple linguistic codes simultaneously. Teachers who regularly incorporate explicit discussions about language differences between spoken and written forms reported fewer semantic and syntactic errors in their students’ texts.

Feedback practices also emerged as a central factor affecting writing development. While some teachers provide detailed comments and corrections, others adopt a more general evaluative style due to time constraints. Students thus develop uneven expectations concerning the importance of accuracy. Teachers who prioritize formative feedback described positive improvement in the clarity and correctness of students’ writing. One teacher commented,

*“When I give specific corrections and explain why something is wrong, the students learn faster. But when I only circle the mistakes, they don’t always understand what to fix.”*

This reflects the critical role of explanation-based feedback in supporting metalinguistic awareness, particularly in the areas of grammar, morphology, and cohesive device use. Classroom culture also shapes students’ engagement with writing tasks. In classrooms where writing is positioned as a creative, enjoyable process, students demonstrate greater willingness to revise their work, experiment with sentence structures, and seek teacher assistance. Conversely, in classrooms where writing is treated as a rigid task associated with punishment or evaluation, students tend to produce minimal, safe, and highly formulaic sentences. One teacher described her strategy:

*“I try to make writing fun by letting students write stories about their daily life. When they enjoy it, they try harder and ask more questions about spelling or words they don’t know.”*

Such motivational strategies underscore the psychological dimension of writing, illustrating how emotional climate and teacher student interaction patterns influence linguistic performance. Finally, teachers highlighted the need for more systematic professional development related to the teaching of writing. Several teachers expressed that they lacked specific training in error analysis and psycholinguistic aspects of writing development. One teacher reflected,

*“We are trained in general teaching methods, but not in how to analyze children’s errors deeply. So sometimes we only see the mistake, not the reason behind it.”*

This lack of specialized competence limits teachers’ ability to diagnose underlying processing issues such as overgeneralization, transfer from oral language, or working memory constraints. Strengthening teachers’ understanding of these dimensions could significantly improve their ability to design interventions that address root causes rather than surface errors. Overall, teachers’ perspectives illuminate the complex interaction between pedagogical practices, classroom environments, and students’ cognitive linguistic development. Writing performance does not emerge in isolation; rather, it is shaped by how teachers correct, guide, model, and motivate their students. The interviews demonstrate that strengthening writing instruction requires not only increased attention to accuracy but also enriched classroom routines, sustained feedback, professional development, and culturally responsive strategies that acknowledge the multilingual realities of students in Makassar City.

The findings of this study reveal that written language errors among elementary students in Makassar City are not merely linguistic phenomena but structural manifestations of deeper organizational, managerial, and systemic failures within schools. In management research, human performance is inseparable from the institutional environment that shapes it (Ahmad et al., 2024; Banwo et al., 2022; Zătreanu, 2024). Thus, children’s difficulties with orthography, morphology, and syntax must be interpreted as downstream consequences of leadership decisions, resource allocation, instructional governance, and the broader administrative culture of the schools in which they learn. This perspective aligns with management scholars who argue that learning outcomes are organizational products, not individual accidents. The patterns of errors identified in this study therefore signal managerial blind spots in instructional prioritization and pedagogical oversight rather than cognitive deficits on the part of the learners.

The persistent orthographic and structural weaknesses observed in students’ writing point to a chronic gap in instructional coordination an issue long recognized in educational management literature. Schools that fail to develop coherent instructional systems often produce fragmented student learning trajectories (Moon et al., 2022). What appears at the level of the text as inconsistent punctuation or unstable sentence structure is, at organizational scale, a symptom of poorly integrated literacy programs and insufficient feedback loops between teachers and administrators. Scholars have repeatedly shown that student literacy improves when school leadership enforces alignment between curriculum goals, teacher preparation, and classroom delivery (Groenewald, 2024; Fjørtoft, 2025; Cassata & Allensworth, 2021). The inconsistencies documented in this study reflect the absence of such alignment, situating children’s errors within a managerial terrain rather than an individual linguistic struggle.

From a capacity-building standpoint, the study’s findings point to underdeveloped professional competencies among teachers, specifically in psycholinguistic analysis and error-responsive pedagogy. Management scholars emphasize that organizational performance improves when employees possess specialized, context-aligned skills (Alirani et al., 2025; Xavier & Korunka, 2025; Payne, 2025). Yet teachers in this study expressed limited understanding of error sources,

relying heavily on corrective marking rather than analyzing underlying cognitive mechanisms. This gap echoes claims that professional development in Indonesian school systems remains procedural rather than capacity-enhancing. Without strategic investment in psycholinguistic competence, writing instruction remains reactive and fragmented. This supports organizational theory arguments that weak skill ecosystems reproduce low-quality outcomes regardless of individual effort.

A related managerial failure concerns the underutilization of feedback as a performance-driving mechanism. In management, high-quality feedback is central to performance improvement. Yet this study found that feedback practices in writing classrooms are inconsistent, often superficial, and rarely explanatory. This is not simply a pedagogical issue; it reflects a broader absence of institutional structures that monitor instructional quality, evaluate teaching performance, and enforce accountability standards. The lack of systematic feedback both to students and to teachers generates a multilayered deficit, where students continue producing errors and teachers remain unaware of how to intervene effectively. Organizational learning theory suggests that such systems stagnate because they operate without robust evaluative routines (Nemati et al., 2024; Lu et al., 2025). Thus, improving written language competency requires strengthening the school's internal learning architecture.

Moreover, the sociolinguistic interference observed in students' writing must be situated within the cultural management domain. The multilingual realities of Makassar City create a complex linguistic environment, but multicultural complexity becomes a barrier only in organizations lacking responsive leadership. Schools that fail to integrate local linguistic identities into their instructional design inadvertently widen the gap between children's home language and academic writing. This aligns with research showing that culturally unresponsive management practices undermine learning equity. The study's findings therefore reinforce the need for leadership models that recognize linguistic diversity as an asset to be managed, not a problem to be avoided.

The classroom practices documented in this study also reveal systemic inefficiencies related to resource allocation and workload distribution. Management literature is unequivocal that employee effectiveness decreases when structural conditions overwhelm their capacity to perform. Teachers facing large class sizes and limited instructional materials inevitably default to time-saving practices, such as copying exercises, that reduce opportunities for students to develop independent linguistic awareness. These conditions mirror findings from educational management studies indicating that resource scarcity undermines instructional differentiation and feedback quality. Therefore, the persistence of writing errors among students must be interpreted as an outcome of resource-constrained managerial environments, not simply inadequate teaching strategies.

Additionally, the study underscores a longstanding observation in organizational management: systems reproduce the behaviors they incentivize. In many Makassar classrooms, writing is framed as a task for evaluation rather than as a process for cognitive development. Under such managerial cultures, teachers prioritize correctness over exploration, and students produce minimalistic writing to avoid mistakes. This echoes performance-management research demonstrating that punitive or compliance-oriented cultures suppress creativity, risk-taking, and deeper learning. To improve written language outcomes, schools must shift toward a developmental performance culture where errors are treated as learning data rather than failures.

The implications of this study extend to strategic educational governance. Written language errors serve as diagnostic indicators of systemic misalignment between pedagogical goals and

organizational structures. Scholars in strategic management argue that effective institutions continuously realign structures, policies, and capabilities to meet performance targets. For literacy development, this realignment must include psycholinguistic ally informed teacher training, rigorous feedback mechanisms, culturally grounded writing programs, and performance models that reward developmental progress. Without such system-level interventions, written language proficiency will continue to stagnate, regardless of classroom-level efforts.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study affirm that written language errors among elementary school students in Makassar City are not isolated linguistic shortcomings, but reflections of deeper systemic, managerial, and pedagogical conditions that shape children's literacy development. The psycholinguistic patterns observed ranging from orthographic instability to syntactic fragmentation signal organizational gaps in instructional coherence, teacher capacity, resource distribution, and culturally responsive leadership. As this study demonstrates, children's written performance is an institutional product embedded within the routines, priorities, and competencies of the schools that govern their learning. Therefore, improving writing proficiency requires more than correcting errors; it requires a strategic realignment of school management practices, including strengthening feedback systems, enhancing teacher expertise in psycholinguistic-informed instruction, addressing workload constraints, and cultivating learning environments where errors function as developmental data rather than punitive markers. By situating student writing within a broader management landscape, this study highlights the need for integrated, system-level interventions that link pedagogical design with organizational capability. In doing so, it positions literacy improvement not simply as an instructional responsibility, but as a core mandate of educational management committed to equitable, evidence-driven learning outcomes.

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