

ANALYSIS OF WRITING AND LETTER SEQUENCING ERRORS IN GRADE 1 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

Writing is a crucial early literacy basic skill for lower-grade elementary school students, but various errors often mark its developmental process. This study aims to describe the types of writing and letter sequencing errors committed by grade 1 elementary students. The method used in this research is qualitative descriptive. Research subjects were selected using a purposive sampling technique from grade 1 students who exhibited various writing errors. Data were collected through direct observation and documentation of the students' written work; data analysis involved identifying, categorizing, and describing the error patterns found. The results showed the existence of six error categories, including: swapped letters, missing letters, extra letters, incorrect letters, switched order, and unanswered/unidentified, where errors appeared more frequently in words with many letters, with the most dominant type of error being missing letters. The conclusion of this study indicates that students' beginning writing skills are still highly varied.

Keywords: Early literacy, beginning writing, elementary school, qualitative descriptive.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the essential basic literacy skills that elementary school students must master, particularly in the lower grades. The early literacy stage is characterized by students' ability to arrange letters into words and sentences (Puspita et al., 2025). This learning process is often accompanied by the emergence of various writing errors among grade 1 elementary students. The errors that arise include swapped letters, missing letters, extra letters, incorrect letters, switched letter orders, as well as unanswered or unidentified writing. The variables in this study are writing and letter sequencing errors in grade 1 elementary school students, which are analyzed based on the students' written work to identify the types of errors that occur.

Prior research indicates that difficulties in beginning writing are common in lower elementary grades. Andini & Ahmadi (2024), in an early literacy study, found that students often experience the addition and repetition of letters within a word, as well as difficulties with certain syllable patterns such as CV-CV (Consonant Vowel-Consonant Vowel) and CVC-CV. These findings suggest that these errors are related to the students' immature phonological abilities in accurately connecting sounds and letter symbols. Rahayu et al. (2024) reported that grade 1 students also still experience difficulties in managing letter height

proportions (for example, between the letters “d, k, i” and “a, n”), which impacts the emergence of letter shape errors and decreased writing legibility.

Writing errors in lower-grade students are not only related to fine motor skills but also to visual and cognitive aspects. Pratiwi et al. (2023) stated in their research that common errors appearing in students' writing include inaccuracies in letter shapes, inconsistent spacing between letters and words, and low legibility levels. These findings indicate that beginning writing skills demand the integration of various developmental aspects. Similar research by Istiqoma et al. (2023) found that lower-grade students (grades I–III) often make errors such as missing or reversed letters and write slowly because their motor control is not yet stable. This condition indicates that writing errors in lower-grade students need to be understood comprehensively so that they can be handled appropriately in learning.

Understanding the types of writing errors is crucial for teachers in designing effective early literacy learning strategies tailored to students' needs. Recognizing the patterns of the most frequently occurring errors allows teachers to provide more targeted guidance, such as writing exercises focusing on frequently swapped letters or copying activities with line guides. Such efforts are expected to help students gradually improve letter shape accuracy, writing spacing, and legibility.

This study aims to systematically describe the types of writing and letter sequencing errors committed by grade 1 elementary school students. This study is expected to provide an empirical overview of writing error patterns in lower-grade students and enrich early literacy studies. The results of this study are also expected to serve as a reference for teachers in designing more effective writing instruction suited to students' needs

METHODOLOGY

This study used a qualitative descriptive method. This method was chosen because the research aims to describe in-depth the types of writing and letter sequencing errors committed by grade 1 elementary school students without providing treatments or manipulating variables. The analyzed data were in the form of students' written work reflecting the actual conditions of early literacy skills in the school environment. This aligns with Prasetyaningsih et al. (2022), who stated that qualitative descriptive research focuses on describing data based on facts, variable conditions, and phenomena directly observed in the field, making it effective for studying educational phenomena in depth.

The subjects of the study were 31 Grade 1 students of SDN 1 Selang. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, namely the deliberate selection of research subjects based on specific considerations relevant to the research objectives. Prasetyaningsih et al. (2022) explained in their research that purposive sampling is chosen because the research subjects are considered to have appropriate experiences and characteristics. The consideration for subject selection in this study was based on the variation in students' writing abilities, encompassing both students who could write correctly and those who still experienced errors in writing and sequencing letters.

Data collection techniques were conducted through observation and documentation, namely by collecting and analyzing students' written work as research documents. This is in line with the research conducted by Sari et al. (2025), which used data collection techniques in the form of documentation of grade 1 students' writing to describe the profile of beginning writing difficulties, making the technique relevant for this study. Grade 1 students were asked to write several simple words closely related to daily life, namely pisang (banana), pesawat (airplane), lemari (cupboard), lampu (lamp), and garpu (fork). All students' written works were collected in the form of worksheets and used as the primary research data. The selection

of these words was adjusted to the characteristics of the lower-grade students' linguistic and cognitive development. It contained variations in phonological structures, thus allowing the emergence of diverse types of writing errors that could be analyzed in depth.

Data analysis was carried out qualitatively and systematically through the stages of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification to find patterns and meanings from the carefully and contextually analyzed data (Rahmani et al., 2025). The analytical steps performed in this study included: 1) collecting all students' written work, 2) reading and carefully examining each piece of writing, 3) identifying writing errors in each word, 4) categorizing errors into swapped letters, missing letters, extra letters, incorrect letters, switched letter order, and unanswered/unidentified, 5) calculating the frequency and percentage of occurrence for each type of error, and 6) describing and interpreting the error patterns based on the found tendencies. The data were then presented in frequency and percentage tables to clarify the analysis results. Data validity was maintained through the researcher's diligence in analyzing the students' writing and re-checking the error classifications to ensure they fit the predetermined categories. Data interpretation was strengthened through theoretical reviews and relevant previous research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results of this study were obtained through observation of students' writing and documentation in the form of Grade 1 student worksheets on a picture-based word-writing activity. Observation in this study focused on observing students' written products. At the same time, documentation was used to collect and examine student worksheets as data sources in identifying the forms and types of beginning writing errors. Based on the documentation of student worksheets, a recapitulation of beginning writing errors per student was obtained, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Writing Errors per Student

Student Initials	Word "Pisang"	Word "Pesawat"	Word "Lemari"	Word "Lampu"	Word "Garpu"	Total Errors
KZ	0	0	0	1	1	2
YM	0	0	0	0	1	1
PL	0	0	1	0	0	1
RY	0	1	0	0	0	1
AA	0	1	0	0	0	1
MS	0	0	1	0	0	1
AS	0	1	0	1	0	2
AR	0	2	0	0	0	1
ZR	0	0	1	1	1	3
YN	0	0	2	0	0	2
AW	0	0	1	1	1	3
VG	1	2	1	1	0	5
RE	0	1	1	1	1	4
MR	2	0	0	1	1	4
IK	1	1	1	1	1	5
NV	1	1	0	1	1	4
AN	2	2	1	2	0	7
RF	0	1	0	0	0	1

13 other students	0	0	0	0	0	0
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The data show that the beginning writing skills of grade 1 students still vary. A total of 13 students were able to write all words according to the pictures without making errors, while other students still exhibited errors in varying amounts. The student with the initials AN recorded the highest number of errors, which was seven, while several other students like IK, VG, MR, and RE also showed a relatively higher number of errors compared to the rest.

This variation in the number of errors indicates that the mastery of beginning writing skills in grade 1 students has not developed evenly. This unevenness is reflected in differences in word-writing accuracy levels in each student's writing. To obtain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the errors that occurred, the analysis did not only focus on the number of errors per student but also on the types of errors appearing on the students' worksheets. Based on the documentation and analysis results, the classification of beginning writing error types is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage based on Error Type

Error Type	Frequency	Percentage
Swapped letters	6	12.5%
Missing letters	21	43.75%
Extra letters	1	2.083%
Incorrect letters	11	22.9167%
Switched order	3	6.25%
Unanswered/unidentified	6	12.5%

The most dominant error type in Table 2 is the missing letters error, amounting to 43.75%. This error is apparent in the writing of students who did not write all the letters in a single word. Another error type that also appeared quite frequently was the incorrect letters error, with a percentage of 22.9%. In this case, students wrote letters that did not correspond to the intended sound; for example, the word “lemari” (cupboard) was written as “memari”.

The next type of error is the swapped letters error, found at 12.5%, with the same percentage for students whose written answers were unanswered or unidentified. The switched-order error at 6.25% also appeared in several words, one of which was reflected in the writing of “garpu” (fork) as “gapur”. The extra letters error appeared in a smaller amount compared to the previous error types, at 2%.

Figure 1. The Results of Several Students' Worksheets

Nama : VG Kelas : <u>1</u> Tulis nama benda di bawah ini! 1.  <u>pisang</u> 2.  <u>pesawat</u> 3.  <u>lemari</u> 4.  <u>lampu</u> 5.  <u>garpu</u>	Nama : AW No 26 Kelas : <u>1</u> Tulis nama benda di bawah ini! 1.  <u>Pisana</u> 2.  <u>Pesawat</u> 3.  <u>lemari</u> 4.  <u>lampu</u> 5.  <u>garpu</u>
Nama : YN Kelas : <u>1</u> Tulis nama benda di bawah ini! 1.  <u>Pisang</u> 2.  <u>Pesawat</u> 3.  <u>Lemari</u> 4.  <u>Lampu</u> 5.  <u>garpu</u>	Nama : RE Kelas : <u>1</u> Tulis nama benda di bawah ini! 1.  <u>Pisang</u> 2.  <u>Pesawat</u> 3.  <u>lemari</u> 4.  <u>lampu</u> 5.  <u> </u>

The diversity of these error types indicates that students still experience difficulties in writing words completely and accurately based on the provided picture examples. These difficulties prompted a more detailed analysis to determine which words had the most errors. The analysis was conducted based on the words tested on the students, the results of which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Errors based on the Tested Words

Tested Word	Total Errors	Dominant Error Type
Pisang (Banana)	7	Missing letters
Pesawat (Airplane)	12	Missing letters
Lemari (Cupboard)	10	Incorrect letters
Lampu (lamp)	11	Missing letters
Garpu (Fork)	8	Missing letters, switched order, and unanswered

Table 3 shows that each word has a different difficulty level for students. The word “pesawat” had the highest number of errors, while the word “pisang” had the lowest, with the error generally being the omission of the letters “ng” at the end of the word. The word “lemari” showed a dominance of incorrect letter errors, while the word “lampu” was more frequently written with missing letter errors, particularly the letter “m”. The word “garpu” exhibited three dominant error types simultaneously: missing letters, switched order, and unanswered. These findings indicate that word structure complexity affects students' abilities to write words accurately.

Discussion

The research results indicate that the beginning writing skills of grade 1 students are still at diverse levels. The variation in the number of errors that emerge reflects differences in early literacy readiness among students in the same class. This difference shows that the process of mastering beginning writing skills occurs gradually and not uniformly for every student. This condition aligns with the findings of Yunita & Nazurty (2023), who stated that students' initial readiness greatly affects writing skills in lower grades. This variation in skills also indicates the need to address individual differences in beginning writing instruction.

The most dominant type of error, the missing letters error, indicates that students still struggle with writing words completely in accordance with the sound structure. This error signifies that students are not yet fully capable of mapping all sounds into complete letter symbols. The omission of letters often occurs because students write based on the most prominent sounds in a word. Atthoriqoh et al. (2024) found that the missing letter error is the most frequently occurring error in the beginning writing stage. This error pattern also highlights that students' phonological awareness still needs to be systematically developed.

Incorrect letters, swapped letters, and switched order errors indicate that students have not fully mastered the relationship between letter shapes and sounds. Inaccuracy in letter selection shows confusion in distinguishing letters with similar shapes or sounds. Letter order errors indicate that students do not yet fully understand word structures. This condition aligns with the explanation by Widyaningrum & Hasanudin (2019), who stated that weak mastery of grapheme and phoneme relationships leads to errors in letter selection and placement. Similar findings were also revealed by Annisah et al. (2024), who noted that letter swap and order errors are commonly found in lower-grade students. This error pattern reflects that students' visual and phonological discrimination skills are still developing, where letter order errors relate to limited understanding of word structures (Suryana et al., 2024).

The emergence of unanswered or unidentified answers indicates that some students are not yet able to represent words in written form. This condition can be related to limited mastery of basic writing skills as well as students' low self-confidence (Rahayu et al., 2025). Students tend to leave answers blank when they feel unsure about their writing. These findings are in line with the research results of Andriana et al. (2022), who found that early-grade students often fail to complete writing assignments when encountering difficulties. This situation illustrates that writing obstacles are not only technical but also related to psychological aspects.

Differences in the number of errors based on the tested words show that word complexity affects students' writing abilities. Words with longer syllable structures and more complex sounds tend to generate more errors. This condition demonstrates that the students' cognitive load increases along with word complexity. Kusuma & Asriyanti (2025) stated that word structure influences the difficulty level of beginning writing. Similar results were also

explained by Andriani et al. (2023), emphasizing that cognitive load plays a crucial role in early writing accuracy.

The diversity in the types and amounts of beginning writing errors indicates that students are still in the early stages of writing skill development. These errors are part of a natural and gradual learning process. These errors should not be viewed merely as failures but rather as indicators of early literacy development. This perspective is supported by Salsabila et al. (2023), who emphasized that beginning writing errors are part of the learning process. The development of writing skills is also influenced by the intensity of practice provided to students. Consistent writing practice can help improve early writing skills (Ali et al., 2025).

The variation in beginning writing skills underscores the need for adaptive and student-centered learning. A uniform learning approach is potentially less effective for students with differing baseline abilities. Beginning writing instruction needs to consider differences in students' abilities, readiness, and learning experiences (Mondong, 2025). This finding is reinforced by research from Natalia et al. (2025), which highlights the importance of a more enjoyable approach tailored to each student's interests and abilities in early writing instruction. The relationship between beginning reading and writing skills also needs attention, as both develop concurrently and are closely interconnected in the early stages (Az-zahra & Muthi, 2024). The teacher's role becomes a crucial factor in assisting students during the writing learning process, as emphasized by Pajeriani et al. (2025) and Ningsih et al. (2019) through their findings on the importance of continuous mentoring in early literacy learning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the beginning writing skills of grade 1 elementary school students exhibit considerable variation and have not developed evenly. Some students can write words corresponding to pictures without errors, while others still experience various forms of writing errors. The most common type of error is missing letters, followed by incorrect letters, swapped letters, unanswered/unidentified letters, switched order, and extra letters. This error pattern indicates that students still struggle with stringing letters into complete words, especially for words with more complex phonological structures. These findings emphasize the importance of early literacy instruction that focuses on strengthening phonological awareness and letter-writing consistency starting in the lower grades.

This study has several limitations that need attention. The research subjects were limited to a single class, so the findings cannot yet be generalized to a broader population. The analyzed data only focused on students' written results without exploring other background factors, such as family environment, teachers' teaching methods, and students' early literacy skills before entering school. This study also has not observed the development of students' writing skills over a specific period, meaning it cannot depict changes in writing skills longitudinally.

In line with these findings and limitations, teachers are advised to implement differentiated early literacy learning strategies tailored to students' ability levels, particularly through strengthening phonological awareness, letter recognition exercises, and gradual syllable and word sequencing activities. Schools are also expected to provide continuous learning support for students experiencing difficulties in beginning writing. For future research, it is recommended to expand the research subjects, examine supporting and inhibiting factors more comprehensively, and conduct longitudinal studies to observe the continuous development of students' beginning writing skills.

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