

The Ability of Student's Spelling at SMA 8 Muaro Jambi

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the spelling abilities of twelfth-grade students at SMA 8 Muaro Jambi, Indonesia, with a specific focus on English nouns. Despite the early introduction of English in Indonesian schools, many students continue to struggle with spelling into their high school years. The research employs a quantitative descriptive approach, utilizing word identification tasks to assess students' spelling proficiency. A sample of students from class IPA 3 participated in a 30-item spelling test, which included both dictation and recognition tasks. The study reveals common spelling errors, including character omissions and substitutions with Indonesian equivalents, indicating a lack of familiarity with English spelling patterns and an over-reliance on phonetic spelling based on the native language. The findings highlight the complexity of spelling as a fundamental aspect of language proficiency, encompassing phonological, visual, morphological, and etymological knowledge. This research contributes to the field of English language education in Indonesia by providing insights into spelling challenges faced by high school students and their implications for overall language proficiency. The results can inform the development of more targeted and effective spelling instruction methods, addressing the persistent gaps in English language acquisition among Indonesian learners.

Keywords: spelling proficiency, English as a foreign language, Indonesian high school study.

INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency plays a crucial role in education, with English holding particular importance as an international language essential for global communication. In educational institutions worldwide, English language learning has become a priority due to its utility in facilitating cross-cultural communication and enhancing educational processes. This study focuses on a specific aspect of language acquisition: spelling ability, particularly among twelfth-grade students at SMA 8 Muaro Jambi, Indonesia. The importance of spelling in language learning cannot be overstated (Wafaa 2017) notes and word lists can be beneficial in teaching and learning to spell if they are organized intentionally around four forms of spelling knowledge: phonological, visual, morphological, and etymological (p. 43). This structured approach to spelling instruction highlights the complexity of the skill and its integral role in language proficiency. Spelling is not merely about forming words from letters; it encompasses a deep understanding of language structures and patterns.

Despite introducing English in

elementary schools in Indonesia, many students struggle with spelling well into their high school years. This persistent challenge can be attributed to several factors, including the significant differences between English and Indonesian spelling systems. English contains numerous words with irregular spellings that do not conform to phonetic rules, such as "one," "do," "late," "who," and "great." Additionally, the presence of homophones (words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings) like "byte," "bite," and "bitt" further complicates the learning process for Indonesian students.

Common spelling errors observed among students include omitting one or more characters (e.g., writing "bok" for "book" or "dring" for "drink") and substituting English words with their Indonesian equivalents (e.g., "guru" for "teacher" or "dokter" for "doctor"). These errors suggest a lack of familiarity with English spelling patterns and an over-reliance on phonetic spelling based on the student's native language. Moreover, some students can identify and pronounce words correctly but struggle to spell them, indicating a disconnect between oral and written language skills. The ability to spell correctly is not

merely a matter of rote memorization but is closely linked to vocabulary acquisition and overall language proficiency. Students who struggle with spelling may face difficulties in written communication, reading comprehension, and even verbal expression. Therefore, addressing spelling issues is crucial for improving students' overall English language skills and their ability to construct meaningful sentences and communicate effectively.

This study aims to investigate the spelling abilities of twelfth-grade students in the IPA 3 class at SMA 8 Muaro Jambi, specifically focusing on their mastery of English nouns. By identifying common spelling errors and analyzing their underlying causes, this research seeks to provide insights that can inform more effective teaching strategies and interventions. The findings of this study have potential significance for various stakeholders in the field of English language education, including teachers, students, and researchers.

The results can contribute to the development of more targeted and effective spelling instruction methods, addressing the most common errors observed among students. For students, the study can provide valuable feedback on their spelling proficiency and highlight areas for improvement. For researchers, this work can serve as a foundation for further investigations into spelling acquisition in the context of English as a foreign language, particularly in Indonesia.

By examining the spelling abilities of high school students, this study aims to bridge the gap between early English language instruction and the level of proficiency expected in higher education and professional settings. Through a detailed analysis of spelling errors and their patterns, we hope to contribute to the ongoing efforts to enhance English language teaching and learning in Indonesia, ultimately improving students' language skills and their readiness for future academic and professional challenges

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE
Definition and Importance of Spelling

Spelling is defined as the ability to form words correctly using the appropriate letters in the correct order. Despite being somewhat neglected in higher education, there is growing recognition of its importance

in academic contexts. Harmer notes that spelling errors can negatively impact a reader's judgment, as incorrect spelling is often perceived as a lack of education or consideration. This underscores the significance of spelling in written communication and its potential impact on academic and professional success. Sherwin proposes that one effective method for improving spelling skills is to train one's eye carefully, suggesting that observing the shapes of words in reading materials can lead to the acquisition of almost perfect spelling. This approach highlights the interconnectedness of reading and spelling skills. Susan further emphasizes the importance of spelling in writing, noting that words with similar sounds may have different spellings, and readers rely on correct spelling to discern meaning.

Table 1. Example of letter spelling

Alphabet Pronunciation				
A	B	C	D	E
[eɪ]	[bi:]	[si:]	[di:]	[i:]
F	G	H	I	J
[ef]	[dʒi:]	[eɪtʃ]	[aɪ]	[dʒeɪ]
K	L	M	N	O
[keɪ]	[el]	[em]	[en]	[əʊ]
P	Q	R	S	T
[pi:]	[kju:]	[ɑ:]	[es]	[ti:]
U	V	W		
[ju:]	[vi:]	[ˈdʌbəlju:]		
X	Y	Z		
[eks]	[waɪ]	[zed/zi:]		

Orthographic Accuracy and Lexical Quality

(Perfetti 2007) The Lexical Quality Hypothesis (LQH) places accuracy at the center of lexical quality. Orthographic accuracy is particularly crucial for lexical quality, as successful word identification requires readers to extract relevant features from perceptual input and map them to existing lexical representations. Neuroimaging findings by (Kubota et al. 2018) indicate that skilled readers have developed specialized visual systems to map visual input to word-specific knowledge. Recent studies have demonstrated the unique contribution of spelling ability to various aspects of reading proficiency. (Andrews and Hersch 2010), (Andrews, Veldre, and Clarke 2020), and (Andrews 2015), found that

spelling ability predicts unique variance in single-word identification tasks. (Andrews and Veldre 2019) and (Parker and Slattery 2021) showed that spelling ability influences behavioral indices of sentence reading. (Veldre, Drieghe, and Andrews 2017), demonstrated that spelling ability predicts oculomotor indices of sentence reading.

Further evidence comes from (Emmorey et al. 2017), who found that adult readers' spelling ability predicts their lexical decision ability, (Andrews 2015), who showed that spelling ability influences eye movements when reading a text. These findings collectively suggest that tests of spelling ability can account for individual differences among proficient adult readers that are not captured by other measures of written language proficiency.

Assessment of Spelling Ability

To comprehensively assess spelling skills, it is crucial to include both spelling dictation and spelling recognition tasks. (Andrews and Hersch 2010) reported high test-retest reliability for both spelling dictation ($r=0.90$) and recognition tests ($r=0.93$). However, these tasks may access different aspects of spelling knowledge.

Spelling dictation directly tests the accuracy of orthographic knowledge, while spelling recognition may be influenced by partial orthographic information and phonological plausibility. (Katz and Frost 2001) found that participants were more likely to accept repeated misspellings as correct if they were phonologically plausible, even if they were correctly rejected on the first presentation. The inclusion of both tasks provides a more complete assessment of an individual's spelling ability. This is particularly important given the evidence from cognitive neuropsychological studies (Coltheart 2002) suggesting a dissociation between reading and spelling abilities in brain-injured patients.

Nouns and Their Types

As this study focuses on the spelling of nouns, it is important to understand their classification. Nouns can be broadly categorized into two main types: concrete nouns and abstract nouns. Concrete nouns refer to tangible entities that can be perceived by the five senses, such as people, places, or

objects. Abstract nouns represent intangible concepts, ideas, or feelings that cannot be directly perceived by the senses. For this study, we will focus on common nouns, which are names given to general classes of people, places, things, or ideas. Common nouns do not refer to specific entities and are not capitalized unless they appear at the beginning of a sentence.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative descriptive approach to examine the spelling abilities of twelfth-grade students, with a focus on common nouns. The research utilized word identification tasks as the primary measuring instrument. This method was chosen to assess students' ability to decode and encode the written form of language, particularly in recognizing and spelling high-frequency words.

The study was conducted during a field experience practice (PPL) in English language learning. The population consisted of twelfth-grade students at SMA 8 Muaro Jambi. A sample of students from class IPA 3 was selected for the study. Prior to the main test, students were exposed to audio materials to familiarize them with the target words.

The primary data collection instrument was a spelling test designed to assess students' spelling abilities. This test comprised 30 questions that required students to spell words based on audio prompts and to distinguish between correct and incorrect spellings. This study collected the data with a few steps, such as pre-test, treatment, and post-test. Further the analysis of the data involved the following steps: 1) Scoring, each student's test was scored based on the number of correct responses, and 2) Classification, scores were classified according to the following interpretation table:

Table 2. Score Interpretation for Students' Achievement

Grade	Description	Score Range
A	Very Good	86-100
B	Good	71-85
C	Enough	56-70
D	Less	<55

To ensure the quality of the research instrument, the following measures were taken:

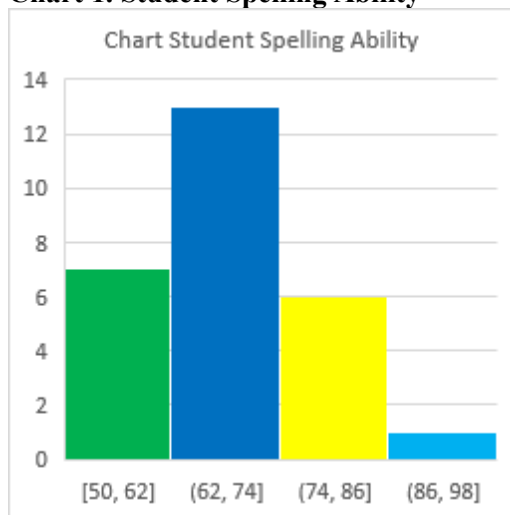
1. Validity: The test was designed to accurately measure students' spelling abilities, focusing on high-frequency words and common nouns.
2. Reliability: Efforts were made to ensure consistency in test administration, including standardized instructions and timing.

Thus, the study was limited to twelfth-grade students in one class (IPA 3) at SMA 8 Muaro Jambi. The focus was specifically on spelling ability related to common nouns, which may not represent the full range of student's language skills. Moreover, all participants were informed about the nature of the study and their participation was voluntary. The data collected was kept confidential and used solely for research purposes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the tests conducted, to be specific the understudies of SMA Negeri 8 Muaro Jambi, are presented below:

Chart 1. Student Spelling Ability



Description :

- Green : Less
- Yellow : Good
- Dark Blue : Enough
- Light Blue : Very Good

With a score in the less category, starting with a score range of <55 with the code names AF, HM, MCR, NS, and N, male. Fair category scores with a score range of 56-

70 with code names AS, AA, DANS, DF, KS, M, MW, NA, RA, and SLR are 3 males and 7 females. Good category scores with a score range of 71-85 with the code names APA, CA, ISWD, MFAM, MAS, MJ, NH, PPA, RJH, S, and SA are 1 male and 10 female. Her score is categorized as very good with a score range of 86-100 with the code name T is female.

From the results of students whose scores are low due to students not being accustomed to using English, lack of confidence, lack of curiosity, or lack of mastery of the English alphabet, while students whose scores are high are due to the acquisition of English language materials, there are also students who take English lessons.

In the description of the data taken from 27 students, table 4.3 shows the students' spelling score which has an average of 70, minimum of 50, and maximum of 90. As a result of the thinking, the analyst found spelling errors. The errors found consisted of excluding vowels and consonants for letter exclusion, including duplicate letters and additional letters for inclusion, swapping vowels for consonants, swapping consonants for other consonants or vowels for other vowels, and replacing vowels or consonants with other consonants.

The spelling ability of students in class XII IPA 3 SMA 8 Muaro Jambi is in the sufficient category with an average of 70 with a score range of 56-70. From the results of the scores that researchers have obtained the scores of female students are higher than male students, and women's spelling is better than men's because men are less interested in English language learning.

Of the 27 students in working on questions and spelling had errors in pronunciation. The average student who scored less is male, the score is between <55 with the correct value in spelling 5 questions, and the words that students pronounce correctly such as "animal, mountain, magazine" because these words are often heard and are familiar. The words that were difficult for students to spell were "rucksack, skyscraper" because they were difficult to spell and the words were rarely heard. Because students do not have the desire to learn English, do not have curiosity and students do not memorize the alphabet in

English, therefore students still think about the alphabet in English.

There were ten students who scored in the fair category, ranging from 56-70. The students scored 60 and 70. Out of 10 questions, the correct words such as: "Animal, clouds, mountain, theme park, the magazine". The words that students pronounce correctly are because students often listen to these words through YouTube, music and teaching and the words that are difficult for students to pronounce are because these words are too unfamiliar to students so students find it difficult to spell.

There were students who scored in the good score category ranging from 71-85, the number of students who scored this score was 11 people who scored in the good category. From the total number of questions 10 words that students pronounced were obtained correctly such as "Animal, clouds, street, theme park, the magazine" and words that were addressed with the spelling "rucksack, farmer, skyscraper". Among the students, there are some students who take lessons so that the words are not too familiar to them while the wrong words are because the words are not heard too often.

Among the students who got less, enough, and good score categories, there was one student who had a very good score category with 90 correct scores on 9 out of 10 questions that had been given, the student named T was female. Of the 10 questions, the student got 2 of them wrong, namely: "rucksack, skyscraper". The student takes English lessons, and often hears English songs, and his English curiosity exceeds other students so that the words given are often heard or are familiarly spoken.

CONCLUSIONS

This study on the spelling abilities of twelfth-grade students at SMA 8 Muaro Jambi, Indonesia, with a focus on English nouns, highlights the persistent challenges in English language acquisition among Indonesian learners. The research underscores the complexity of spelling as a fundamental aspect of language proficiency, encompassing phonological, visual, morphological, and etymological knowledge. The findings reveal that despite years of English instruction, many students continue to struggle with spelling well into

their high school years. Common errors observed include character omissions and substitutions with Indonesian equivalents, indicating a lack of familiarity with English spelling patterns and an over-reliance on phonetic spelling based on their native language. These challenges are exacerbated by the significant differences between English and Indonesian spelling systems, particularly in dealing with irregular spellings and homophones in English.

The study's methodology, employing a quantitative descriptive approach with word identification tasks, provides valuable insights into students' abilities to decode and encode written English. The use of both spelling dictation and recognition tasks offers a comprehensive assessment of students' spelling knowledge, addressing both the accuracy of orthographic knowledge and the influence of partial orthographic information and phonological plausibility. The research highlights the interconnectedness of spelling ability with other aspects of language proficiency, including vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, and overall communication skills. It supports previous findings on the relationship between spelling ability and lexical quality, emphasizing the unique contribution of spelling to various aspects of reading proficiency. This study contributes to the field of English language education in Indonesia by providing a detailed analysis of spelling errors and their patterns among high school students.

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