

Analysis of spelling errors in elementary school teacher education student papers at Mulawarman University: a study based on PUEBI

Ahmad Raihan¹, Zahwa Ayudya Tri Lestari¹, Hety Diana Septika¹

¹ Universitas Mulawarman

Correspondence: hetyum@gmail.com³

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ABSTRACT (10 PT)

This study aims to identify and discuss spelling errors made by students from the Elementary School Teacher Education Program at Mulawarman University, referring to the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI). This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a document analysis method. We selected two papers written by students in 2025 to obtain information from these papers, we conducted several studies and then examined the papers in five steps: we identified errors, we grouped them, we described them, and we tried to understand their meaning. Until we arrived at a conclusion. The results showed that there were 90 spelling errors found in both papers. Misuse of capital letters was the most common type of error found, namely 40 cases, followed by misspellings of words with 29 cases, and errors in the use of punctuation with 21 cases. These findings indicate that students' accuracy in self-editing still needs to be improved, as does their understanding of the application of Indonesian spelling rules. Thus, the results of this study are expected to be a consideration for lecturers in developing more effective academic writing learning strategies for prospective elementary school teachers.



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INTRODUCTION

The ability to write scientific papers is one of the academic competencies that students must possess, including those in the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program (PGSD). In writing scientific papers, the use of spelling in accordance with the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI) is a very important aspect because it influences the clarity of meaning, readability, and professionalism of academic writing. Spelling accuracy not only demonstrates the writer's language skills but also reflects the quality of the scientific work produced. The application of correct spelling rules requires attention in every academic writing process (Nurafiyani *et al.*, 2026).

Although students have received Indonesian language instruction in college, various studies show that spelling errors are still frequently found in their papers (Humaira & Firdaus, 2021). These errors generally include capitalization, punctuation, word spelling, and loanwords that do not comply with PUEBI regulations (Nurwicaksono & Amelia, 2018). Similar findings indicate that capitalization, punctuation, and word spelling are the most common errors in students' scientific papers (Marselina, 2022). In fact, capitalization errors are one of the most common spelling errors due to students' lack of understanding of PUEBI rules (Hayati, 2020; Ritonga *et al.*, 2025).

In addition to errors in capitalization, inaccurate punctuation is also a serious problem in scientific writing. Inappropriate punctuation can disrupt readers' understanding of the text and potentially lead to ambiguity in conveying scientific information (Podding *et al.*, 2024; Oktaviani & Ramdhani, 2022). Studies of student academic texts also show a recurring tendency for errors in capitalization, punctuation, and non-standard word usage (Soebiantoro, 2025). This situation indicates that mastery of spelling remains a challenge that requires attention in Indonesian language learning in higher education.

Spelling errors in student academic papers essentially reflect a lack of accuracy in the academic writing process (Rosdiana, 2020). Inaccuracy and a lack of self-editing are the main factors causing

spelling errors to persist in college assignments (Wati *et al.*, 2022). Yet, the ability to edit and proofread writing is crucial for producing quality scientific work. Therefore, analysis of language errors needs to be conducted continuously as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of Indonesian language learning in higher education (Gea *et al.*, 2026).

Various previous studies have examined language errors in student scientific papers. Dalimunthe *et al.* (2025) stated that students' language errors occur not only in syntactic aspects, but also in the use of spelling in accordance with PUEBI provisions. The results of Hamdani *et al.*'s (2024) research indicate that the application of spelling remains one of the dominant sources of errors in student scientific papers. Furthermore, Oktaviani & Ramdhani (2022) emphasized that regular analysis of student writing is important to evaluate the level of mastery of Indonesian spelling rules. However, research specifically examining spelling errors in papers by PGSD students at Mulawarman University is still relatively limited. Most previous studies were conducted on students from other universities or on different types of writing, so they do not reflect the actual condition of PGSD students' spelling abilities at Mulawarman University.

Based on the description, this study aims to describe the forms of spelling errors found in the papers of students of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program, Mulawarman University based on the PUEBI rules. This study is expected to contribute in the form of empirical information regarding the level of student compliance with Indonesian spelling rules, become evaluation material for lecturers in designing academic writing learning strategies, and become a reference for further research related to language error analysis. The novelty of this study lies in the focus of the study which specifically analyzes spelling errors in the papers of students of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program, Mulawarman University based on the PUEBI rules so that it can provide a more contextual picture of the problems of spelling use in the academic environment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach with a document analysis method. The qualitative descriptive approach is used to describe and analyze the forms of spelling errors found in student papers based on the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling (PUEBI).

The population in this study was all student papers of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program (PGSD) at Mulawarman University. The research sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique by selecting two papers as data sources, namely: (1) Group 6's paper entitled Assessment in Literature Learning in Elementary Schools, consisting of 13 pages and compiled in 2025; and (2) Group 1's paper entitled Elementary School Level Poetry Lessons, consisting of 21 pages and compiled in 2025. Both papers were selected because they contain elements of scientific writing that make it possible to find various forms of spelling errors.

Data collection was conducted through documentation studies. Researchers carefully and repeatedly read the entire paper to identify spelling errors that did not comply with PUEBI rules. The data found was then recorded on a prepared spelling error identification sheet.

The research instrument consisted of the researcher as the primary instrument, assisted by a data identification sheet based on the PUEBI spelling categories. The categories analyzed included capitalization, word spelling, punctuation, and other relevant spelling elements.

The data analysis technique is carried out through several stages. First, data identification, which involves finding and marking spelling errors in the paper. Second, data classification, which involves grouping errors based on the spelling category they violate. Third, data description, which explains the type of error and the PUEBI rules that should be used. Fourth, data interpretation, which involves analyzing the trends in errors that emerge and the factors that may influence them. Fifth, conclusions are drawn based on the analysis results.

To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses a theoretical triangulation technique by comparing research findings with PUEBI provisions and the results of relevant previous research regarding the analysis of spelling errors in students' scientific works.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on document analysis conducted on two papers by students of the Elementary School Teacher Education Study Program (PGSD) at Mulawarman University compiled in 2025, various forms of spelling errors were found that did not comply with the General Guidelines for Indonesian Spelling

(PUEBI). The identified raw data has been processed and classified into a pure data tabulation form to provide a clear quantitative picture of the distribution of these errors. The analysis categories focused on three main aspects, namely errors in the use of capital letters, spelling errors, and errors in the use of punctuation. The cumulative distribution of frequencies and percentages of each form of spelling error is presented in the following table.

Table 1 Distribution of Frequency of Spelling Errors in PGSD Student Papers				
No	Type of Error	Group 1 Paper	Group 6 Paper	Total Errors
1	Errors in Using Capital Letters	24	16	40
2	Misuse of Words (Prepositions, Conjunctions, and Non-Standard Words)	18	11	29
3	Punctuation Usage Errors	13	8	21
Total Errors		55	35	90

The data in Table 1 shows that the total number of spelling errors identified in both student papers was 90. The most dominant type of error found was in the category of capitalization, with a total of 40 errors. Furthermore, errors in word spelling were in second place with 29 errors, and errors in punctuation were recorded at 21 errors. Group 1's paper, which discussed poetry, had a higher quantity of errors, namely 55 errors, compared to Group 6's paper on literary assessment, which recorded 35 errors. This is linearly influenced by the thickness of the document, where Group 1's paper consisted of 21 pages while Group 6's paper only consisted of 13 pages.

The presentation of the data on spelling errors was then grouped separately for each data to provide a detailed picture of the characteristics of the dominant mechanical linguistic errors in each group of students based on the titles of the papers they wrote.

Table 2 Spelling Errors in Group 1 Paper				
No	Type of Error	Data	Repair	Information
1	Capitalization Errors (Names of God/Pronouns)	rahmat dan <i>hidayahnya</i>	rahmat dan <i>hidayah-Nya</i>	Capital letters are used for the pronoun god.
2	Mistakes in Capitalization (Title of the Paper)	pelajaran puisi di Tingkat Sekolah Dasar	Pembelajaran Puisi di Tingkat Sekolah Dasar	Each initial word in the title must be capitalized.
3	Capitalization Errors (Geographic Names)	di pulau kalimantan	di Pulau Kalimantan	Geographical names followed by proper names must be capitalized.
4	Mistakes in Writing Prepositions (Direction/Place)	di Tingkat, didalam, kehadiran	di tingkat, di dalam, ke hadirat	prepositions must be written separately.
5	Use of Non-Standard Words and Typos	khususnya, nasehat, pembelajaran, memiliki, unsue	khususnya, nasihat, pembelajaran, memiliki, unsur	according to KBBI standards

6	Use of Foreign Terms	menulis puisi dengan jenis free verse	menulis puisi dengan jenis <i>free verse</i>	foreign words must be written in italics.
7	Punctuation Error Period	A. Latar Belakang. B. Rumusan Masalah.	A. Latar Belakang B. Rumusan Masalah	a period is not used at the end of a subtitle.
8	Comma Punctuation Error in Details	terdiri atas struktur fisik, struktur batin dan unsur historis.	terdiri atas struktur fisik, struktur batin, dan unsur historis	It is mandatory to use a comma before the final detail conjunction.

Table 3 Spelling Errors in Group 6 Paper

No	Type of Error	Data	Repair	Information
1	Errors in Using Capital Letters (Academic Titles)	Hety Diana Septika, M.Pd	Hety Diana Septika, M.Pd.	a period is used at the end of academic degree abbreviations.
2	Incorrect Use of Capital Letters (Agency Name/Standard)	di sekolah dasar	di Sekolah Dasar	capitals function as the proper name of educational units.
3	Use of Foreign Terms	pendekatan authentic assessment	pendekatan <i>authentic assessment</i>	foreign terms must be written in italics.
4	Repetitive Use of Foreign Terms	assessment for learning dan of learning	<i>assessment for learning</i> dan <i>of learning</i>	foreign terms must be written in italics throughout.
5	Use of Non-Standard Words and Typos	proses penilaiaan berbasis kelas	proses penilaian berbasis kelas	correction of typos in word formation.
6	Comma Punctuation Error	guru dapat menilai keterampilan nyata siswa bukan hanya hasil	guru dapat menilai keterampilan nyata siswa, bukan hanya hasil	use a comma before a correlative conjunction.
7	Hyphenation Error	Rahmat dan karunianya-Nya	rahmat dan karunia-Nya	hyphens are used to combine words with the pronoun God.

Errors in capitalization were the most common type of error in the analyzed papers. In Group 1's paper, a very glaring capitalization error was found in the introduction, where students wrote the phrase "*Puji Syukur ke hadirat Allah SWT yang telah memberikan rahmat dan hidayahnya...*" and the phrase "*Pelajaran Puisi di Tingkat Sekolah dasar*". Based on PUEBI rules, capital letters should be used for the first letter of the elements of the names of religions, holy books, and God, including names and pronouns for God. In the word "*hidayahnya*" it should be written with a capital letter at the end of the possessive to become "*hidayah-Nya*". In addition, the basic word in the title written in the paragraph must begin with a capital letter because it is part of the title of the official written work.

Mistakes in the writing of geographical names and proper nouns were also detected in the content of Group 1's paper, such as the writing of *Tingkat sekolah dasar* dan *pulau Kalimantan*. According to spelling rules, elements of geographical names followed by proper nouns or as part of the name of an institution or formal educational unit must be written using a capital letter at the beginning of the word, so the correct writing is *ingkat sekolah dasar* (if general) or *Sekolah Dasar* (if referring to standard levels), as well as *Kalimantan Island*. A similar condition was found in Group 6's paper document, where there was inconsistent writing of *Sekolah Dasar* in the middle of a regular sentence,

as well as errors in writing words indicating kinship relationships being addressed, such as inconsistent writing of the lecturer's name and title on the title page, namely between *Hety Diana Septika, M.Pd.* and *Hety Diana Septika, S.Pd., M.Pd.* This uncertainty in the use of capitalization reflects the high level of student inaccuracy in distinguishing the syntactic function of words indicating specific objects and general objects in a scientific sentence.

The second largest category of errors is spelling, which includes inaccuracies in writing standard words, prepositions, affixed words, and writing foreign terms. In Group 1's paper, there were many uses of non-standard words and repeated *typos*, such as the words *khususnya*, *nasehat*, *pembelajaran*, *berkreativitas*, *memiliki*, *teman* (which is intended for the theme word), *pembetuknya*, *ekstrinstik*, *unsue*, *religious*, *kepersahabatan*, *mampresentasikan*, *aprestasi*, *memahai*, and *maten*. In addition, students also made fatal errors in writing the prepositions *di* and *ke* which are combined with adverbs of place or direction, such as in the words *di Tingkat*, *di dalam*, *di luar*, *ke hadirat*, and *daripada*. Based on PUEBI provisions, prepositions such as *di*, *ke*, and *dari* must be written separately from the word that follows them if they indicate a substantive direction, place, or position.

Another crucial error in this academic writing is the student's failure to italicize foreign language terms. The student wrote the term "*free verse*" without italics in the theoretical review chapter of Group 1's paper. In Group 6's paper, the student also wrote foreign terms such as "*authentic assessment*," "*assessment for learning*," and "*assessment of learning*" using regular cursive. This writing clearly violates the rules of standard scientific writing, which require all foreign terms or loanwords that have not been fully absorbed into Indonesian to be printed in italics to facilitate the reader's understanding of the glossary.

Punctuation errors were the third aspect analyzed in this study. The dominant form of punctuation errors in Group 1 and Group 6 papers was the inaccuracy of the placement of periods, commas, hyphens, and symbols indicating detailed elements. In the problem formulation and objectives section of Group 1's paper, students forgot to put a period at the end of the statement sentence. Conversely, in several subheadings, students actually placed excessive periods, such as in the writings *A. Latar Belakang.*, *B. Rumusan Masalah.*, and *C. Tujuan.* Based on PUEBI rules, periods should not be used at the end of titles, subtitles, or main headings. Misuse of commas was also found in sentences detailing at least three elements, where students often forgot to place a comma before the final detail conjunction such as the sentence "*terdiri atas struktur fisik, struktur batin dan unsur historis*". According to scientific spelling rules, a comma must be placed before the conjunction *and* to separate the final detail element independently. In addition, comma errors in the form of the absence of punctuation before coordinating conjunctions of opposition (such as "*tetapi*" or "*melainkan*") are also often found in Group 6's draft papers.

The occurrence of various spelling errors in the papers of elementary school teacher education students at Mulawarman University demonstrates a close relationship between mastery of linguistic rules and the level of discipline and accuracy of students in independently editing academic texts. Conceptually, language errors at the university level occur not because of a lack of material exposure, but rather due to a lack of habituation and low accuracy in applying theoretical rules to formal writing practices. Students tend to underestimate the mechanical aspects of writing such as punctuation, capitalization, and the writing of prepositions because they are more focused on fulfilling the substance or content of the paper assignments assigned by the lecturer in charge of the course. As a result, the formal quality of the resulting papers is low and does not reflect the academic professionalism expected of prospective elementary school teachers.

The results of this study align with and fully support the findings of several previous researchers who examined similar issues in higher education. The dominance of errors in capitalization and standard word usage in this study reinforces the findings of studies conducted by Marselina (2022) and Hayati (2020), which stated that capitalization errors are the most common type of spelling error found in student scientific papers due to students' weak practical understanding of the dynamic PUEBI rules. The findings regarding punctuation inaccuracies that can lead to ambiguity in scientific information in this paper also align with the arguments of Podding *et al.* (2024) and Oktaviani & Ramdhani (2022), who emphasized that punctuation errors are a chronic problem in student academic texts that require regular educational intervention. In addition, the large number of non-standard words and errors in writing prepositions identified in this study validate the results of Soebiantoro's (2025) study which

underlines the recurring tendency of mechanical linguistic errors in college assignments due to the weak *self-editing* process by students before the assignments are submitted.

However, there are slight differences in context or novelty in the results of this study when compared to the previous study conducted by Dalimunthe *et al.* (2025). While Dalimunthe *et al.*'s study stated that student errors were evenly distributed up to the level of syntax and complex sentence structure, the findings of PGSD students at Mulawarman University showed that errors were actually clustered in the realm of elementary spelling, such as mass *typos* and failure to distinguish prepositions from affixes. This indicates a shallow, rushed writing process, where students are strongly suspected of copying and *pasting* from various digital sources without going through an adequate rereading or proofreading process. This condition confirms the view of Wati *et al.* (2022) that external factors such as limited time for completing assignments and a lack of detailed feedback from lecturers regarding linguistic aspects contribute to perpetuating a culture of inaccurate writing among students. The results of this spelling error analysis can be used as a strong foundation for study program managers to redesign the learning strategy for Indonesian language courses, especially in improving the skills of editing scientific documents for prospective elementary school teacher students.

CONCLUSION

From research This can found a lot error spelling in paper Study Program students School Teacher Education Base University Mulawarman who still Enough often happened . Of the two papers that have been researched, identified as many as 90 errors spelling. Many errors found, such as use letter capital with a total of 40 errors, followed by by error spelling errors with a total of 29 errors and error use sign read as many as 21 errors. Various error this, start from writing replacement Wrong God, name geographical terms foreign, and placement sign read it wrong. This is show that student Not yet apply rules Guidelines General Spelling Indonesian Language (PUEBI) which is not yet optimal, as well as show lack of accuracy in the editing process independent before collection. From errors the prove that mastery rules spelling that has been studied in a way theoretical Not yet fully implemented in activity write academic. then, must There is strategy more learning intensive and evaluation sustainable language in eye studying Indonesian at the level universities, in particular for prepared students become educators at school base.

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