

English Morphological Awareness and Cultural Mindset in Indonesian College Students' Descriptive Text Writing: Challenges, Strategies, and Digital Technology Utilization

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Abstract

English morphological awareness, cultural mindset, writing experience, and digital technology utilization significantly influence writing development, yet their interaction effects remain underexplored. Integrated investigation of morphological, cultural, experiential, and technological influences on writing development remains warranted. This study employed qualitative descriptive study. A total of 92 non-EFL Indonesian undergraduate students voluntarily participated in this study. The findings revealed morphological errors in students' descriptive texts, comprising derivational and inflectional errors. Inflectional errors predominantly involved incorrect present-tense forms, followed by incorrect noun formation, comparative forms, third-person singular verb forms, and adverb formation. Moreover, students demonstrated that cultural mindset can influence vocabulary choice, word formation, expressions, focus of description, and the details students include in their descriptive texts. With regard to writing experience, most participants perceived English writing as challenging due to limited writing practice, inadequate vocabulary mastery, grammatical inaccuracy, and low self-confidence. To address these difficulties, participants identified several effective strategies, including peer feedback, regular writing practice, gradual writing development from simple structures, vocabulary enrichment, extensive reading, grammar improvement, and confidence building. The participants also reported that digital applications, such as Grammarly, grammar checker, DeepL, Google Translate, Duolingo, and ChatGPT, positively supported their writing development. This study concludes that integrated morphological awareness, cultural understanding, learning strategies, and digital technologies strengthen English writing proficiency.

Keywords: Cultural mindset, English morphological awareness, writing descriptive text



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1. Introduction

Writing is a complex activity requiring a wide range of skills (Chandler & Sayeski, 2024). During the evolving digital educational landscape, particularly in English descriptive writing, learners are expected to critically evaluate, adapt, and integrate linguistic knowledge with cultural understanding in technology-mediated writing practices. In this context, English morphological awareness and cultural mindset are essential for producing grammatically accurate, contextually appropriate, and culturally meaningful texts. These competencies are particularly important for Indonesian non-EFL university students, who frequently engage in English writing despite limited formal linguistic training. Although AI-powered writing technologies have reduced surface-level writing challenges, they have also heightened concerns regarding technological dependency, inadequate linguistic understanding, and limited intercultural competence.

Writing is a fundamental competency in globalized education, facilitating effective communication, academic engagement, and participation in increasingly interconnected professional contexts. Nevertheless, Indonesian non-EFL university students continue to encounter challenges in producing coherent English texts with appropriate organization, vocabulary, and grammatical accuracy. Although prior studies have recognized morphological awareness, cultural mindset, and digital technology-assisted writing experience as influential factors, these variables have largely been examined independently. This study addresses this gap by integrating these linguistic, cultural, and technological dimensions within a unified analytical framework to provide a more comprehensive understanding of descriptive writing performance among Indonesian non-EFL learners.

A number of previous studies had demonstrated strong and positive connection between English morphological awareness and writing skill. English morphological awareness strongly worthwhile and correlated to students' performance in writing narrative text (Santoso, 2018), writing essay (Anggraeni, 2018), writing argumentative essay (Ikhsan, 2019), writing application letter (Junaidi & Zaim, 2022), academic writing (Asaad, 2024; Asaad & Shabdin, 2021), and translating recount text (Irawansyah et al., 2024). By English morphological awareness, an individual is in high flexibility to use word families (e.g. *analyze-analysis-analytical*), and more precise in expressing ideas, alter meaning of unfamiliar word e.g. *believe* into *un+believe+able= unbelievable* (Asaad, 2024; Asaad & Shabdin, 2021; Wahid & Farooq, 2019). In addition, English morphological awareness also played a significant role to enhance vocabulary mastery (Arviyolla et al., 2022; Poilema et al., 2025; Wardana, 2023), and improve grammar, lexis and writing competence (Wahid & Farooq, 2019). Although English morphological awareness has demonstrated substantial benefits for writing performance, previous studies have also reported contradictory findings. Prior works showed that English morphological awareness had no correlation to IELTS

writing performance (Naveed et al., 2023), limited impact on writing quality (Nagy et al., 2002), and other factors such as dialectical variation, classroom instruction, and sociolinguistics background outperformed English morphological awareness in writing (Apel & Tate, 2009).

Furthermore, previous studies also discovered role of culture in language learning where it is considered significant to integrating culture in language learning (Dlaska, 2010), and role of culture in language learning can drive learners into feeling more connected, more open to other ways of thinking, greater sense of their own place in the world, and knowing about their and other's cultures (Lockley & Yoshida, 2014), and strengthening intercultural pedagogy in EFL settings is important (Husain et al., 2025).

Unlike previous studies that examined morphological awareness, cultural factors, or writing experience with digital technology-assisted writing independently, this study integrates these dimensions within a single analytical framework to understand descriptive writing among Indonesian non-EFL university students. The novelty of this study lies in its integration of morphological awareness, cultural mindset, and digital technology-mediated writing practices during writing experience into a unified analytical framework to explain descriptive writing performance among Indonesian non-EFL university students, thereby extending writing research to an underexplored learner population and providing new insights into how linguistic, cultural, and technological factors interact in contemporary higher education.

This study hopefully gives contributions to the existing literature. *First*, it integrates morphological awareness, cultural mindset, and writing experience with digital technology or AI-assisted writing practices into a single analytical framework to explain descriptive writing performance, whereas previous studies have typically examined these variables independently. *Second*, it extends the scope of writing research by focusing on Indonesian non-EFL university students, a population that has received relatively limited attention compared with English-major or EFL learners. *Third*, it explores the emerging role of digital technology (AI)-assisted writing practices as a complementary factor in writing development experience and examines how AI interacts with learners' linguistic knowledge and cultural understanding in shaping descriptive writing. Together, these contributions provide a more comprehensive perspective on the multiple factors influencing descriptive writing performance in contemporary higher education, including its challenges and solutions.

1.1. Research questions

To address the objectives of this study, three research questions were formulated as follows:

1. What are errors of English morphological awareness of non-EFL learners in writing descriptive text?
2. How do students perceive that cultural mindset exhibit in their writing descriptive text?
3. How do the students perceive on writing experiences in terms of challenges, strategies, and digital technology utilization?

1.2. Theoretical framework

This study is grounded in three principal constructs: English morphological awareness, cultural mindset, and writing experience, with the latter encompassing learners' writing challenges, writing strategies, and the use of technology-assisted writing tools.

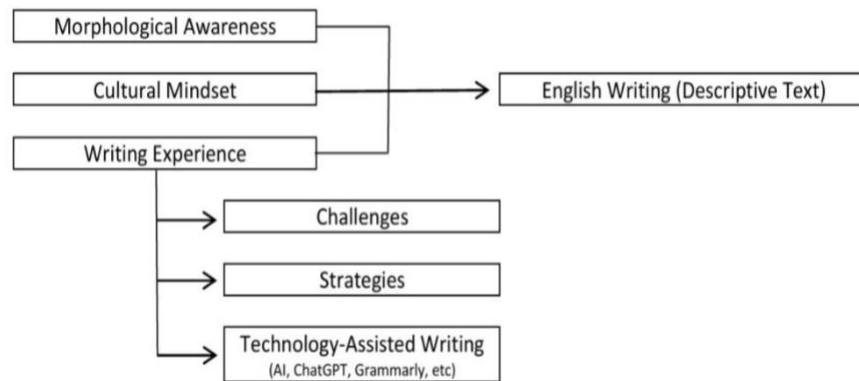


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

1.2.1. English morphological awareness

English morphology is the formation of word structure in English language, and it deals with how morphemes are combined to create words, change fully or partially of a certain word along with meaning, grammatical and function alternation (Handoko, 2019; Haspelmath, 2002; Katamba, 2005; McCarthy, 2002). Moreover, English morphological awareness is a prominent factor to enhance vocabulary mastery where it is acting as the key predictor of vocabulary acquisition (Noviyenty et al., 2020) and the ability to reflect on morphemes including smallest part and smallest meaning unit (Borges & Matzenauer, 2022). Moreover, English morphological awareness, according to Giyatmi (2017), is an individual's ability to form a word structure by adding, removing, or adjusting the affixes (prefix, and suffix) into a certain English word as well as altering word meaning.

In brief, in the context of writing, English Morphological awareness facilitates the accurate and flexible use of vocabulary by enabling learners to recognize and manipulate word structures, thereby improving lexical choice, grammatical accuracy, and overall textual quality.

1.2.2. Cultural mindset

According to Oyserman (2011) stated that cultural mindset means a set of mental representations or cognitive schema containing culture-congruent mental content (knowledge about the self and the world), cognitive procedures and goals. Cultural mindset briefly drives to understanding of individual's orientation toward local or global cultural frameworks, may influence how learners process and produce language, including writing English texts. In terms of culture in language learning, Khan (2014) emphasized that the incorporation of culture, particularly local culture, is expected to support learners by promoting contextualized learning, strengthening emotional engagement, reducing learning burden, and encouraging active and participatory learning experiences. In addition, Dlaska (2010) in his study

suggested a familiarization of target language culture through contact with authentic materials.

By integrating local culture while exposing learners to the target culture, writing instruction can enhance students' ability to express ideas effectively, develop intercultural awareness, and communicate with greater sensitivity to diverse cultural contexts.

1.2.3. Writing experience

Writing, as it is defined as the interaction between a person's life and objective world (Wang, 2023) and communication by using language through graphic symbols (Nasution et al., 2024), plays a significant role as one of four main language skills which allows an individual to be productive in expressing ideas, feelings, aspiration and the like in a written form. Descriptive text is defined as type of text that has function to describe people, places, things and the like with objective to create a visual image of people, things, places and the like (Lestari et al., 2022). Accordingly, writing experience in English, particularly in composing descriptive texts, refers to the process of developing the ability to portray people, places, objects, or events in a clear and detailed manner that enables readers to form vivid mental images.

English writing skill undeniably becomes significant since global opportunities confronts English writing skill requirement, for instance dealing with international business and marketing such as company contracts, financial reports, drafting proposal, and corporate communication (Chhetri, 2023), academic and research career such as writing scientific article, international scholarship, applying for research grant, and presenting scientific work in global academic-scientific stage (Padma, 2021), and creative and digital industry and remote work such as content creator, editing, journalism, copywriting, and the like (Ajaka & Nabhan, 2019).

1.2.4. Digital technology-assisted writing

Automated writing evaluation tools can improve students' writing skill in collaboration with teacher (Hyland, 2026). Digital technology-assisted writing encompasses the use of digital tools to planning, drafting, revising, and editing throughout the writing process. In contemporary language education, technologies such as word processors, collaborative platforms, automated feedback systems, and digital technology-based writing assistants enhance linguistic accuracy, idea generation, revision, and self-regulated learning. Consequently, these technologies have become integral to writing development by complementing learners' linguistic competence and strategic writing abilities while promoting more efficient, reflective, and interactive writing practices. As noted by Ramadhan (2024), integrating digital technologies into writing significantly foster students' writing proficiency across diverse educational contexts.

2. Method

This study applied qualitative descriptive study. Since this study employed qualitative approach, this study employs words to describe a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This qualitative approach was also to address the scientific inquiry with

emphasis on the depth and richness of context and voice in understanding social phenomena (Lim, 2025). In brief, this study employs qualitative in completing the research.

This study involved 92 non-EFL students at an Islamic college in Indonesia who willingly joined as the participants. In selecting the student-participants, purposive sampling method was applied. The criteria of student-respondents selection were as follows; (1) having enrolled as non-EFL college students; (2) enrolled as the second or third semester students who were considered having passed two English courses previously (English I in the first semester and English II in the second semester); (3) having experience in writing assignment during English courses previously in semester 1 and semester 2; (4) having bare minimum of vocabulary mastery, at least sufficient to describe surroundings. The selected 92 student-respondents were considered eligible to meet the criteria of being participants due to having rich and reliable information needed in this study. Furthermore, this research employed a generic label with numbers such as *p1*, *p2*, *p3*,... to stand for the following: *participant 1*, *participant 2*, *participant 3*, and so forth, for student-participants to respect privacy and confidentiality concerns in accordance with ethical research studies.

There were two kinds of data collection in this study. Firstly, the researcher collected the descriptive text projects from the selected 92 student-participants where formerly assigned to compose a descriptive text by using English language with random topic consisting of minimum three to five sentences. Secondly, the researcher gave a semi-structured interview to gain their cultural mindset and English writing experience. In interview data collection, 10 of 92 participants were purposively selected based on willingness, study program diversity, and relevant experience. Prior to the interviews, eligible participants received an information sheet explaining the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Participants who agreed to participate provided written informed consent before the interviews were conducted. The semi-structured interview protocol underwent expert review, validation, and revision to enhance clarity and content validity. Given that participants were non-EFL students, the interview was conducted in Indonesian language to ensure comprehensibility and facilitate effective data collection.

A mixed-method analysis was applied during data analysis process. Firstly, the obtained data of the morphological errors on the students' descriptive text projects were analyzed via several steps as follows; (1) analyzing types of specific morphemic errors of derivation and inflection; (2) finding the dominant errors equipped with simple quantification; (3) drawing conclusion. Secondly, following the interviews, the collected data were analyzed systematically using thematic analysis of six-phase process: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2008). The trustworthiness of the analysis was ensured by applying credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). The analysis was conducted in accordance with the research design, with data organized into themes that corresponded to the study objectives. This procedure enabled an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions of cultural

mindset and writing experience along with digital technology utilization during writing experience of descriptive text.

3. Findings and Discussion

3.1. English morphological awareness of non-EFL students in writing descriptive text

The findings obtained from the data collection and analysis procedures indicated that the descriptive texts produced by 92 Indonesian non-EFL college students contained a total of 42 English morphological errors. The distribution and classification of these morphological errors are presented in the following table.

Table 1. Findings of morphological errors in students' descriptive text

No.	Types of Morphemic Errors	Total	Percentage
1.	Inflectional	34	81%
2.	Derivational	8	19%
	Total	42	100%

As presented in Table 1, the predominance of inflectional errors suggests that Indonesian learners experience difficulties with grammatical marking because Indonesian does not obligatorily mark tense and subject-verb agreement, unlike English.

This finding indicates that the learners encountered difficulties in applying English morphological rules during the writing process, although the nature of these difficulties varied according to the type of morphology involved. From the perspective of English morphology, derivational and inflectional morphemes serve different linguistic functions. Derivational morphemes create new words or change a word's grammatical category, such as *beauty* to *beautiful* or *teach* to *teacher*, whereas inflectional morphemes modify a word to express grammatical information without changing its lexical meaning, such as tense (*walk* - *walked*), number (*book* - *books*), or subject-verb agreement (*play* - *plays*). Since descriptive writing requires learners to construct grammatically accurate sentences rather than merely produce vocabulary, mastery of inflectional morphology becomes particularly important because English grammar depends heavily on obligatory morphological marking to signal syntactic relationships. Consequently, morphological errors in learners' writing reflect not only limited knowledge of word formation but also incomplete acquisition of English grammatical morphology.

The predominance of inflectional over derivational errors can be attributed to the structural characteristics of English morphology. Although English contains a relatively limited number of inflectional morphemes, their use is grammatically obligatory, requiring learners to accurately identify syntactic contexts and apply appropriate markers, including plural *-s*, past tense *-ed*, progressive *-ing*, and third-person singular *-s*. This cognitive demand renders inflectional morphology more challenging than derivational morphology, where lexical alternatives are often available. Moreover, descriptive writing predominantly employs the simple present tense, necessitating consistent subject-verb agreement and plural noun marking. The frequent occurrence of these grammatical features increases opportunities for

inflectional errors, reflecting both the obligatory nature of English grammar and the linguistic demands of the descriptive genre.

The predominance of inflectional errors is strongly influenced by the learners' first language background, Indonesian language, whose morphological system differs substantially from that of English. As an analytic language, Indonesian primarily conveys grammatical relationships through word order, lexical items, and contextual cues rather than obligatory inflectional morphology. Verbs do not inflect for tense or subject, and plurality is typically expressed through numerals, quantifiers, reduplication, or context rather than mandatory plural suffixes. Consequently, Indonesian learners frequently transfer these linguistic patterns into English, resulting in the omission or misuse of tense, agreement, and plural markers.

Table 2. Specific morphological errors

No.	Specific Morphological errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Incorrect present form	18	43
2.	Incorrect noun	9	21
3.	Incorrect third person singular verb	6	14
4.	Incorrect comparative	7	17
5.	Incorrect adverb	2	5
	Total	42	100

The predominance of present-tense errors is particularly noteworthy given that descriptive texts conventionally employ the simple present tense to describe the characteristics, attributes, and habitual states of people, places, objects, or phenomena. Because this genre requires consistent application of present-tense verb forms throughout the text, learners are repeatedly exposed to contexts in which grammatical accuracy depends on the appropriate use of English inflectional morphology. In language mastery, learners demonstrated the highest levels of proficiency in the use of capitalization, spelling, articles, pronouns, verb tenses, subject-verb agreement, singular and plural nouns, and prepositions (Shahsavar, 2019). Consequently, weaknesses in tense marking and subject-verb agreement become more evident in descriptive writing than in genres that permit greater variation in verb tenses. These findings suggest that students' morphological difficulties are closely associated with the linguistic demands of descriptive writing, where accurate realization of present-tense structures is essential for maintaining grammatical cohesion, syntactic accuracy, and the overall communicative effectiveness of the text.

Therefore, the findings suggest that improving students' descriptive writing requires explicit instruction that integrates morphological awareness with genre-specific writing practice, enabling learners to develop greater control over the inflectional features that underpin grammatical accuracy and coherent written expression in English.

The morphological errors identified in this study correspond with previous research emphasizing the crucial role of English morphological awareness in determining learners' writing performance across diverse genres. Previous studies have demonstrated that morphological awareness significantly correlates with students' ability to produce effective

narrative texts (Santoso, 2018), essays (Anggraeni, 2018), argumentative essays (Ikhsan, 2019), application letters (Junaidi & Zaim, 2022), academic writing (Asaad, 2024; Asaad & Shabdin, 2021), and recount text translations (Irawansyah et al., 2024). These findings suggest that inadequate morphological knowledge may hinder learners' capacity to construct grammatically accurate and contextually appropriate written texts. Therefore, the occurrence of morphological errors in this study highlights the necessity of strengthening morphological awareness as an essential component of English writing instruction to improve learners' grammatical control, lexical flexibility, and overall written communication competence.

Moreover, this study's finding aligns with previous studies demonstrating that strong morphological awareness enables learners to manipulate word families and express ideas more precisely, and infer the meanings of unfamiliar words through morphological decomposition (Asaad, 2024; Asaad & Shabdin, 2019, 2021; Wahid & Farooq, 2019). Furthermore, morphological awareness contributes significantly to vocabulary development (Arviyolla et al., 2022; Poilema et al., 2025; Wardana, 2023), and enhances grammatical knowledge, lexical proficiency, and overall writing competence (Wahid & Farooq, 2019). Thus, morphological instruction should be embedded within writing pedagogy to foster comprehensive language development.

Nevertheless, English morphological's role in writing in this study present a contrasting perspective to previous research reporting a limited or insignificant relationship between morphological awareness and writing performance. While some studies found that morphological awareness did not significantly predict IELTS writing achievement (Naveed et al., 2023), exerted minimal influence on writing quality (Nagy et al., 2002), or was outweighed by factors such as dialect variation, instructional practices, and sociolinguistic background (Apel & Tate, 2009), the present findings highlight its substantial role in shaping descriptive writing accuracy. This discrepancy suggests that the contribution of morphological awareness may be context-dependent, influenced by writing genre, learner characteristics, and language learning environments. Therefore, examining morphological errors provides valuable insights into specific linguistic challenges and supports the development of targeted pedagogical interventions for improving English writing competence.

Ultimately, English Morphological awareness is a fundamental determinant of English writing proficiency, particularly in descriptive text production, as it enhances grammatical accuracy, lexical diversity, and textual coherence. The prevalence of morphological errors underscores the importance of explicit morphological instruction integrated with genre-based writing pedagogy. Although prior research has reported inconsistent relationships between morphological awareness and writing performance, its impact appears to be context-dependent, varying across writing genres, learner characteristics, and instructional settings. Accordingly, targeted pedagogical interventions addressing morphological competence can substantially improve students' written communication and overall English language learning outcomes.

3.2. Cultural mindset in writing

Based on the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews, students generally demonstrated five major themes that emerged from their responses.

- 1) Cultural mindset can influence vocabulary choice.
- 2) Cultural mindset can influence word formation.
- 3) Cultural mindset can influence expressions.
- 4) Cultural mindset can influence focus of description.
- 5) Cultural mindset can influence the details students include in their descriptive texts.

These perspectives collectively suggest that writing is not merely a mechanical language activity, but a culturally mediated cognitive process in which learners draw upon their social experiences, linguistic background, and cultural knowledge to construct meaning in writing performance.

First, cultural mindset influences vocabulary choice, which is a fundamental component of writing skill development. In second language writing, lexical richness and appropriateness are essential components of communicative competence because they determine the precision, clarity, and sophistication of written expression. *Second*, cultural mindset also affects word formation, which directly relates to English morphological awareness. Differences between first-language and English morphological systems may lead learners to transfer native linguistic patterns when constructing derived or compound words, resulting in nonstandard forms. *Third*, culture shapes the expressions students employ in descriptive texts. Variations in cultural orientations influence what students prioritize in descriptions, such as social relationships, personal identity, traditions, or environmental features.

Fourth, cultural mindset influences the focus of description. Learners' cultural orientations influence their perception of what aspects of a subject are considered significant, relevant, or worthy of emphasis. Consequently, descriptive texts often reflect culturally constructed patterns of attention and interpretation rather than functioning as purely objective representations of reality. *Fifth*, culture affects the details included in descriptive texts. Students selectively elaborate on aspects that align with their cultural values and experiences.

These findings highlight that writing is not solely a cognitive or linguistic activity but also a culturally mediated process in which learners' values, experiences, and worldviews shape meaning construction. This perspective is in alignment with previous research emphasizing the importance of integrating culture into language learning (Dlaska, 2010), as cultural awareness enables learners to develop deeper connections with the target language and become more receptive to diverse perspectives (Lockley & Yoshida, 2014), and have potential to raise cultural awareness of the socio-political realities underlying language teaching (Huang & Guo, 2026). Furthermore, the role of intercultural pedagogy in EFL contexts has been increasingly recognized as essential for developing learners' communicative competence and cultural understanding (Husain et al., 2025). Therefore, integrating cultural dimensions into English writing instruction enhances linguistic

competence, intercultural awareness, and contextual appropriateness, thereby fostering holistic language development through culturally responsive writing pedagogy.

The conclusion is that cultural mindset is essential factor shaping English writing performance, as writing involves not only linguistic knowledge but also culturally mediated processes of meaning construction. Learners' cultural backgrounds influence lexical selection, morphological processing, expressive choices, descriptive focus, and the details incorporated into written texts. This approach promotes holistic language development, especially English writing skill by connecting linguistic proficiency with cultural understanding.

3.3. Students' perspectives on writing experiences

This section presents the findings concerning (a) four major challenges encountered by students during the writing learning process, (b) seven strategies employed to address these challenges, and (c) six digital technology applications utilized to support writing development throughout the English writing process.

a. Challenges during writing

Based on the findings derived from interviews with the student respondents, four major challenges related to writing proficiency were identified. These challenges emerged consistently across participants' responses and are presented as follows:

Table 3. Challenges in English writing

No.	Identified challenges in writing
1.	Limited writing practice
2.	Inadequate vocabulary mastery
3.	Grammatical inaccuracy
4.	Low self-confidence in writing

Writing is the most difficult English skill to master, compared to reading, listening, and speaking. The matter was exacerbated by student-participants who claimed to writing English sentences infrequently. As a result of their limited writing practice, they struggle greatly when faced with an English writing task. During the interview, p3 admitted to this condition, saying:

‘(the reason is) Lack of writing practice in English language. Perhaps it is caused by low frequently of English learning duration which is given since primary school, secondary school, senior high school, and now university level where average learning hours for English lesson was given only once in a week with time allocation 2 hours per meeting. (p3).

The participants' next writing challenge was inadequate vocabulary mastery. It caused participants to go blank since they only had a limited quantity of vocabulary for describing what they intended to write about during the descriptive writing assignment. Vocabulary is essential to build English sentence. It is hard for a person to write unless he or she has an adequate vocabulary. This was also clearly recorded during the interview with p7. Their perspectives about inadequate vocabulary mastery as challenge in writing are as follows:

‘Vocabulary (that I have) is insufficient. I am doubtful to write a correct and proper sentence due to limited vocabulary. Moreover, I don’t know whether the vocabulary sounds natural, proper, appropriate or not (p7).’

Grammatical inaccuracy is also issuing the students need to tackle down during writing. In their narratives, they faced issues in terms of using tenses, grammar and modal auxiliary when writing English text. This issue was well recorded in their answer of semi-structure interview, articulating:

‘The biggest problem I got during writing English text is the correct use of grammar and tenses. I bit confused in using correct and natural grammar and tenses, for instance, confused determining when using present perfect or simple past (p8).

They affect one to another where lack of practice results in poor vocabulary mastery and grammar errors, reducing writing quality and confidence (Safitri et al., 2019). The next finding of challenge in writing is low self-confidence in writing. It steers how far, how good, and how meticulous a learner can write a story in English. This feeling also makes learners brave, not afraid to express anything in their writing. This issue was amplified by an interviewee, voicing:

‘During writing English text, I feel not confident, I am afraid of making mistakes’ (p7)

The findings of challenges during writing experience conclude that restricted exposure to writing activities reduces learners’ opportunities to develop linguistic competence and apply English grammatical structures effectively. Moreover, inadequate vocabulary mastery and confusion in tense usage hinder their ability to construct accurate and meaningful texts. Psychological factors, particularly fear of making mistakes, further constrain their willingness to express ideas.

b. Strategies in writing English

As presented in the following table, the interview findings revealed seven principal strategies employed by students to overcome challenges encountered in the writing process.

Table 4. Strategies in English writing

No.	Identified strategies in writing
1.	Peer feedback
2.	Regular writing practice
3.	Gradual writing development from simple structures
4.	Vocabulary enrichment
5.	Extensive reading on English sources
6.	Grammar improvement
7.	Building self-confidence in writing

Peer feedback leads learners to strengthen their skill by progress improve in some stages. This point makes an individual to be aware of his/her mistake in writing by allowing others to

check and correct his/her writing results. This positive move was claimed by an interviewee, saying:

‘I like to write short sentences about my day or hobbies. I also chat with friends in English and we help each other. Sometimes, I ask my teacher to check my writing. It helps me improve and feel more confident.’ (p7)

Regular writing practice, start writing and vocabulary mastery are also essential capital to maximize the writing skill much better. These measures may be regarded as forms of self-assessment of writing proficiency. As a pedagogical scaffolding strategy, self-assessment facilitates learners’ reflection on their writing performance and supports the progressive development of writing competence within instructional contexts (Mazloomi & Khabiri, 2016). These strategies were voiced by p9, p10, and p4 as follows.

‘Practice writing regularly. Create a daily writing practice schedule, even if it's just a sentence or two. The more you practice, the more you'll get used to it’ (p9).

‘In my opinion, the solution when it comes to difficulty writing English sentences is to start with simple sentences first. Don't try to write complex sentences right away. We can write the subject, verb, and object clearly, then slowly add additional information. Over time, our skills will develop.’ (p10)

‘The solution (to enhance writing skill in English language) is to memorize more English vocabulary.’ (p4)

Other positive strategies to enhance writing in descriptive text, as narrated by interviewees is extensive reading on English sources, grammatical improvement, and building self-confidence in writing English sentence. These realities voiced by p5, p6, and p10, voicing:

‘Read more English texts, because reading enriches vocabulary and natural sentence structure.’ (p5)

‘Learn basic grammar gradually. Focus on learning one grammar rule first, for example simple tenses, then move on to the next. Don't rush.’ (p6).

‘Don't be afraid to make mistakes. Mistakes are part of the learning process. The important thing is to keep trying and learn from them.’ (p10).

Building self-confidence becomes more essential when using AI-assisted writing (Yao & Fan, 2026), and self-efficacy in writing is crucial in writing (Murdoch et al., 2021), and needs to supportive peer environments to enhance writing self-concept, while suggesting targeted strategies to address writing anxiety that promotes both academic success and emotional well-being (Huang, 2026). Those aspects will guide an individual to have a big picture of insight and a lot new vocabularies after reading many sources, write well in sentence structure because of good grammar-structure skill, and will take a learner to write anything in mind due to self-confidence.

Eventually, addressing writing challenges requires an integrated approach through peer feedback, regular writing practice, gradual progression from simple to complex structures, vocabulary enrichment, extensive reading of English texts, continuous grammar

improvement, and strengthened self-confidence. Together, these strategies promote greater writing accuracy, fluency, and overall descriptive writing proficiency.

c. Digital technology utilization during writing

The student participants articulated their perspectives regarding the utilization of digital technologies that supports writing skill development. The interview findings identified six types of digital applications employed to support writing practice, as presented in the following table.

Table 5. Kinds of digital application used in English writing

No	Identified Digital App Used in writing
1.	Grammarly
2.	Grammar checker
3.	Deepl App
4.	Google Translate
5.	Duolingo
6.	ChatGPT

From the interview findings, it was revealed that digital technology plays a significant role in supporting the writing process. The integration of AI-assisted writing tools with human cognitive capabilities enhances technological affordances while fostering higher-order critical thinking throughout the writing process (Pratama et al., 2025). Based on the interview, students frequently rely on three main applications for grammar-checking: Grammarly, which assists them in identifying errors in tense usage and spelling; Grammar Checker, which help evaluate sentence structure and overall grammatical accuracy; and Deepl, which students also use to refine grammar. In practice, these tools not only improve the quality of their academic writing but also increase their confidence, as they can revise drafts more effectively and learn from the corrections suggested by the applications. This experience voiced by p3, p2, and p7 as follows.

‘I use Grammarly to check my grammar, spelling, and sentence structure. It points out spelling and grammatical errors, and it's incredibly helpful because it instantly points out errors and provides suggestions for improvement. It makes me feel more confident in my writing.’ (p3)

‘Also, using tools like grammar checker can support you while writing. It is used to check incorrect grammar, sentence structure, etc that support writing skill’ (p2)

‘Use a dictionary and tools Use an English-Indonesian dictionary or tools like Grammarly or DeepL to help structure sentences and check grammar.’ (p7)

Moreover, Using Google Translate, Duolingo, and ChatGPT provide students with valuable support in their English writing learning experience. Google Translate helps less-proficient in writing (Moelyono et al., 2023). Even, Google Translate supports learners quickly understand unfamiliar vocabulary or phrases and provides alternative word choices that can enrich their writing. Duolingo, with its interactive exercises, reinforces grammar,

vocabulary, and sentence structures in a fun and engaging way, which indirectly strengthens students' ability to construct written texts more accurately. Meanwhile, ChatGPT can assist writing learning process (Afiliani et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2024) and suggested to integrate into second language (English) writing instruction (Yuan & Dao, 2026). Moreover, it offers real-time feedback, explanations, and suggestions for improving coherence, style, and grammar, allowing students to practice writing in a more communicative and interactive manner. Together, these three digital tools complement one another by offering instant translation, structured language practice, and personalized writing assistance, making the writing process more effective, accessible, and motivating for learners. This finding well recorded in respondents' narratives as follows.

'Sometimes, I use a dictionary and tools Use an English-Indonesian dictionary or tools like Grammarly or DeepL to help structure sentences and check grammar.'
(p4)

'in Writing, one of the apps I use most often is Duolingo because I find it fun, engaging, and interactive. Besides learning vocabulary, Duolingo also teaches you how to construct sentences correctly.' (p3)

'ChatGPT several times I used to ask for help with sentence structure, paragraph revision, or sample English text. This is incredibly useful, especially when I want to learn to write more naturally and in a more varied way.' (p7).

The findings demonstrate that digital technologies serve as valuable supports in enhancing students' English writing development by providing linguistic assistance, feedback, and opportunities for independent learning. The identified applications contribute to different stages of the writing process, ranging from error identification and vocabulary enrichment to sentence construction and text revision. These digital tools not only enhance students' linguistic competence but also increase their confidence and motivation to engage in English writing tasks. Therefore, integrating digital technology into English writing instruction can provide adaptive, accessible, and learner-centered support, particularly for students who experience difficulties with vocabulary, grammar, and independent text production.

3.4. Interrelationship among English morphological awareness, cultural mindset, and digital technology-assisted writing experience

The findings demonstrate that English writing performance among Indonesian non-EFL university students is shaped by the interaction of morphological awareness, cultural mindset, and learning experiences. The predominance of inflectional errors reveals that limited control of English morphological features, particularly tense marking, pluralization, and subject-verb agreement, remains a major challenge due to differences between Indonesian and English morphological systems. These difficulties highlight the necessity of explicit morphological instruction integrated with genre-based writing practices. Furthermore, cultural mindset influences how learners select vocabulary, construct word forms, organize descriptions, and represent sociocultural experiences in written texts, indicating that writing is a culturally mediated process rather than merely a linguistic activity. Students' challenges in writing are further affected by limited practice, vocabulary constraints, grammatical uncertainty, and low

confidence; however, these issues can be addressed through strategic practices and digital technology support. The integration of morphological awareness, intercultural perspectives, and digital technology-assisted writing tools provides a comprehensive pedagogical approach to improving grammatical accuracy, lexical development, confidence, and overall descriptive writing competence. Thus, effective EFL writing instruction should combine linguistic, cultural, and technological dimensions to foster meaningful and contextually appropriate English descriptive writing development.

4. Conclusion

This research answer three main research questions namely; (1) assessing Non EFL learners' English morphological awareness when writing descriptive texts, (2) exploring their perspectives on cultural mindset on writing, (3) writing experiences to uncover the underlying factors influencing their morphological skills in writing, notably in terms of challenges, strategies, and digital technology utilization.

The analysis of students' descriptive texts identified 42 morphological errors, comprising 34 inflectional errors (81%) and 8 derivational errors (19%). Among the specific error categories, incorrect present-tense forms were the most frequent (43%), followed by incorrect noun forms (21%), comparative forms (17%), third-person singular verbs (14%), and adverb forms (5%). These findings indicate that inflectional morphology, particularly tense and agreement marking, represents the primary challenge in students' English writing.

Semi-structure interview results revealed five significant role of cultural mindset in students' writing descriptive text: 1) cultural mindset can influence vocabulary choice, 2) cultural mindset can influence word formation, 3) cultural mindset can influence expressions, 4) cultural mindset can influence focus of description, and 5) cultural mindset can influence the details students include in their descriptive texts. Moreover, the results of semi-structure interview identified four major challenges in writing; 1) limited writing practice, 2) inadequate vocabulary mastery, 3) grammatical inaccuracy, and 4) low self-confidence in writing. In response to these challenges or difficulties, interviewees addressed seven principal strategies to tackle down the challenges or difficulties in writing, namely 1) peer feedback, 2) regular writing practice, 3) gradual writing development from simple structures, 4) vocabulary enrichment, 5) extensive reading on English sources, 6) grammar improvement, and 7) building self-confidence in writing. Moreover, during writing class, interviewee claimed utilized six digital technology applications to support writing skill development, namely Grammarly, grammar checker, DeepL, Google Translate, Duolingo, and ChatGPT,

This study was limited by its relatively small sample of non-EFL learners and exclusive focus on descriptive writing, potentially restricting the generalizability of the findings. The reliance on self-reported data regarding cultural influences, writing challenges, strategies, and digital technology use may have introduced response bias. Furthermore, the absence of a longitudinal design precluded examination of changes in morphological awareness and writing proficiency over time. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted cautiously and may not be readily transferable to other educational contexts or learner populations.

Future research should include larger and more diverse samples across multiple writing genres, including narrative, argumentative, and academic writing, to provide a broader understanding of the interplay among English morphological awareness, cultural mindset, and digital technology in writing development. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine the sustained effects of writing practice and digital tool use. Additionally, experimental, quasi-experimental, and correlational designs could evaluate the effectiveness of instructional strategies and digital applications. Integrating qualitative classroom observations with students' reflective accounts would further enrich understanding of writing challenges, learning strategies, and technology-enhanced writing development.

This study hopefully makes significant theoretical and practical contributions to English language pedagogy by advancing an integrated framework that elucidates the interrelationship among morphological awareness, cultural mindset, and digital technology-assisted writing applications in shaping descriptive writing performance among Indonesian non-EFL university students. Theoretically, it enriches the existing literature by offering empirical insights into the complex interplay between linguistic competence, cultural orientation, and technology-enhanced language learning. Practically, the findings underscore the instructional potential of digital technology-supported tools, including Grammarly, DeepL, Google Translate, Duolingo, and ChatGPT, in mitigating morphological errors and improving writing accuracy. These findings provide evidence-based guidance for developing contextually relevant, technology-integrated writing pedagogies that foster grammatical accuracy, intercultural competence, and sustainable improvements in English writing proficiency within Indonesian higher education.

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