

# AN ANALYSIS OF GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN WRITING ABSTRACT OF SKRIPSI MADE BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF ISLAM MALANG

Aminah

(Mahasiswa Jurusan Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris FKIP Unisma)

**Abstract:** This article aims at knowing what types, what the frequencies, and what are the causes of grammatical errors in writing abstract made by the English language education students at university of Islam Malang. The research design in this study is qualitative research design in the form of descriptive design. The subject of this study is the abstracts of *skripsi* made by the English language education students 2017/2018 academic year, and it consists of 30 writing abstracts. The findings showed that there were some types of grammatical errors made by the English language education students at university of Islam Malang, those were omission of article, 35 items (20.23%) of substitution singular to plural, 16 items (9.24%) of disagreement of subject and tenses, 4 item (2.31%) of substitution singular to plural, 1 item (0.67%) of omission of to be, and 1 item (0.57%) of omission of main verb. The causes of the grammatical made by students were interlingual transfer, limited knowledge of English grammar, and carelessness.

**Key words:** Grammatical Errors, Abstracts, *Skripsi*

## INTRODUCTION

Grammar rule is a theory of the use of language (Gerot & Wignell, 1995). When we use English, we cannot escape from grammar, because grammar is the study of how to organize words, phrases, and sentences. Grammar has an important role in all skills in English because grammar makes the four skills are meaningful. Unfortunately, learning grammar is not as easy as we think, because even though we have studied English for years, sometimes we still often encounter grammatical errors in the English that we learn both written and spoken.

Farisatma et al. (2017) stated that grammar is one of the English language elements that is very important to be mastered in all skills of language such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Andrews et al. (2006) say that language capability growing incrementally through the interaction of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These four skills have their difficulties and simplicity because not every student who likes English can master all of these four skills. In the process of students' learning, students are not separated from language errors. Zaman et al. (2015) stated that grammar is one of the biggest errors found by students.

Grammatical Errors are terms that are commonly used in incorrect grammar usage. James (2013) states that grammatical errors are some languages that don't work. Singh et al, (2017) also stated that the reason students make an error in using grammar is because of interference from their first language.

Grammatical errors are also happened in writing skill as the research that was conducted by Susanti (2017) she found that there are some types of grammatical errors were made by students in their narrative writing text.

Andrews et al. (2004) stated that writing is conveying ideas by arranging several sentences so that they become a perfect unity. The writing ability of students in Indonesia is not good enough even though they are already sitting at the University, because even if they courses, they are only more focused on speaking than on writing. (Hasan & Marzuki, 2017) However, when students write something they found difficulties. In academic writing especially, students are required to make scientific writing, one of the types of scientific writing is an abstract.

According to Yang (1995), Abstract should contain objectives, materials and methods, results, and conclusions that provide maximum information with minimum words. An abstract is a one-paragraph summary of a research project that describes the essential contents of a work. An abstract is a self-contained, short, and powerful statement that describes a larger work (Lancaster, 2003). Students of English language education such as in the University of Islam Malang are required to write their final project in English one of the final projects is abstract writing. By the time they were asked to do this final project, they had already studied English for about 7 semesters. Looking at their experience, the Researcher thought it was logical to assume that they are already capable of writing in perfect English. In actuality, many of them are not exempt from making grammatical errors in their writing. Some of them are still confused to arrange sentences grammatically.

The researcher expects to be able to find the types, the frequencies, and the causes of grammatical errors in writing the abstract of *skripsi* made by English language education students at the University of Islam Malang. This study was focused to analyze grammatical errors based on linguistic category according to Dulay et al. (1982).

Sari & Sinaga (2020) conducted their research as the research that was also conducted by Hasan & Munandar (2018). They analyzed what are the types of grammatical errors made by students in terms of linguistic category. Sari & Sinaga (2020) found that the most occurring error is past tense, while Hasan & Munandar (2018) found that misformation of verbal became the error that dominantly made by students.

The distinctions between all of the previous studies and the current study were in the previous study, the researchers just focused on investigating what types of grammatical errors made by students in terms of linguistic category according to Dulay et al. (1982), but in the current study, the researcher also emphasized in calculating the frequencies of each type of the

grammatical errors and describing the causes of the grammatical errors in abstract of *skripsi* made by the English language education students 2017/2018 academic year at University of Islam Malang.

## **METHOD**

The researcher used qualitative research design in the form of descriptive as research design. The researcher was intended to get a description of what types of grammatical errors, what are frequencies of each grammatical error, and what are the causes of the grammatical errors in writing the abstract of *skripsi* made by students of English language education at the University of Islam Malang.

The researcher took 30 abstracts made by students as the subject of this research. So, this qualitative research was taken in a form of written data that is *skripsi* abstract of the English Education department to be collected, analyzed, and interpreted in the form of verbal description/words.

This research used humans as the primer instrument. Human instrument means the researcher herself who would be the instrument. She acted as the planner, data collector, analyzer, and final reporter of the research findings. According to Sugiono (2008), in qualitative research, the instrument is the researchers themselves.

The technique of collecting data that was used by the researcher was documentation technique, during the process of the research, every researcher collects several documents to be a data source. The data can be a public documents such as newspaper or official reports or private documents such as private journals, e-mails, or letters (Anderson, 2005). In documentation step, the researcher directly collected the abstract by took pictures of thirty abstracts of thesis made by students of the English education program 2017/2018 academic year at the university of Islam Malang in the library of university of Islam Malang.

In this case, the writer used the steps which were stated by Creswell (2012) to be the data analysis technique. Those generic steps of specific research consisted of six steps. The six generic steps were as follow: a) Organizing and preparing the data for analysis, in this this step, the writer prepared the abstract of the thesis as a data source for analyzing process, b) Reading all of the data, after having all of the data, the writer read them to get information about the main point as much as possible, c) Beginning detailed analysis with a coding process, the writer took students' errors in grammatical aspects into categories and labeled those categories, d) Using the coding process, the writer described what types of grammatical

errors, counted about what are the frequencies of each grammatical error, and described the source of grammatical errors made by students to be analyzed, the researcher wanted to be easy in describing each type of error, the data were presented quantitatively, the errors were accounted for the percentage of errors frequency for each type of grammatical errors. The researcher used formula as follows:

$$\text{Percentage of errors} = \frac{\text{Number of one type of error}}{\text{Total number of all errors}} \times 100\%$$

e) Interpreting and meaning the data,

It was about how the description and theme would be represented in the qualitative descriptive, f) Drawing conclusion, in the final step of data analysis, the writer interpreted the finding of the research after finishing all of the steps.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study, the classification of error used Dulay's linguistic category theory (1982). The researcher identified the types of grammatical errors and classified them into two categories of verb tense and noun phrase. The researcher found 173 errors which spread into 18 of verb tenses, and 155 of noun phrases.

In verb tense errors, the researcher found three types of errors, disagreement of subject and tenses, omission of to be, and omission of the main verb.

1) disagreement of subject and tenses

Data 1: This research contribute for.....

The example showed that the sentence explained the significance of the study, which mean the tenses should be used is simple present tenses. The word "contribute" be the verb of the word "this research". Because the tenses should be used is simple present tense which means if the subject is singular so the verb must be added by s/es. So the word "contribute" must be written "Contributes".

Correction: This research contributes for.....

Data 2: This researcher analyze how the procedure of STAD to improve reading comprehension.

Because the example showed the research question from the study, so the tenses that The example showed that the sentence explained the significance of the study, which mean the tenses should be used is simple present tenses. The word "contribute" be the verb of the word "this research". Because the tenses should be used is simple present tense which means if the subject is singular so the verb must be added by s/es. So the word "contribute" must be written "Contributes".

Correction: This research contributes for.....

Data 2: This researcher analyze how the procedure of STAD to improve reading comprehension.

Because the example showed the research question from the study, so the tenses that should be used in the sentence is past tenses. In a positive sentence of the past tenses, the verb that should be used is V2. The words “analyze” is V1 which means the word “analyze” does not fit to the sentence, and it should be written, “analyzed”.

Correction: This researcher analyzed how the procedure of STAD to improve reading comprehension.

Data 3: The level of significance indicate that the P value is less than 0.05 or  $0.009 < 0.05$ .

Because the example showed the specific finding from the study, so the tenses that should be used in the sentence is past tenses. In a positive sentence of the past tenses, the verb that should be used is V2. The words “indicate” and “is” are V1 which means they do not fit to the sentence, and they should be written “indicated” and “was”.

Correction: The level of significance indicated that the P value was less than 0.05 or  $0.009 < 0.05$ .

## 2) Omission of to be

In error of omission of to be, the researcher just found one error, the error was: The questionnaire was distributed to 10 students (5 from high-achieving students and 5 from low-achieving students) which selected use random sampling.

The example showed that the student omitted the “to be” on the underlined words. It’s known from the sentence above the writer would write a passive voice sentence which formula is S + Be + V3... the to be was omitted in this sentence is “were”.

Correction: The questionnaire was distributed to 10 students (5 from high-achieving students and 5 from low-achieving students) which were selected using random sampling.

## 3) Omission of main verb

In error of omission of main verb, the researcher just found one error, the error was: So when the students who low level in their emotional intelligence,

The example showed the students omitted the main verb in the sentence. After the word “who” and before the word “low level”, it needs to put the main verb. The main verb that fits to the sentence is the word “have” because the relative pronoun of “who” substitute for “students” which means it is a plural form. The word “have” is the suitable one to this sentence because the word “have” explains what students have that is “low level”.

Correction: So when the students who have low level in their emotional intelligence.

In terms of noun phrase, the researcher found there types of errors, omission of the article, substitution of singular to plural, and substitution of plural to singular.

#### 1) Omission of Article

Data 1: Further researcher can use it as an experimental design so they can....

The example showed that the student omitted the article before the word “further” the article should be written is article “The”.

Correction: The Further researcher can use it as an experimental design so they can....

Data 2: The instrument in this research was giving test.

The example showed that the student omitted the article before the word “test” and the article should be written in the example is article “A”.

Correction: The instrument in this research was giving a test.

Data 3: The researcher used mind mapping technique as a media.

The example showed that the student omitted the article before the word “mind” the article should be written is article “A”.

Correction: The researcher used a mind mapping technique as a media.

#### 2) Substitution of Singular to Plural

Data 1: The researcher had a conclusion that this teaching processes had a positive effect

The example showed that the students substituted the form of singular to plural. The word “processes” should be written “process” because in the sentence above there is no word that shows a plural form, the word before "processes" shows a singular form, so the word "processes" is not a word that fits in the sentence, and the word "processes" shows a plural meaning because it adds the letter “s” after the word "processes".

Correction: The researcher had a conclusion that this teaching process had a positive effect.

Data 2: By it features such as document, picture, and sounds.

The examples showed that the students substituted the form of singular to plural. The word “sounds” should be written “sound” because in the sentence above before the word “sounds” especially the word “document” and “picture” showed the singular form, and it is the pluralism of the sentence. So that the word "sounds" is not a word that fits in the sentence, and the word "sounds" shows a plural form because it adds the letter “s” after the word "sound".

Correction: By it features such as document, picture, and sound.

Data 3: This research was done in one cycles.

The example showed that the student substituted the form of singular to plural. The word “cycles” should be written “cycle” because in the sentence above there is no word that shows a plural form, the word before "cycles" shows a singular form so that the word "cycles" is not a word that fits in the sentence, and the word "cycles" shows a plural meaning because it adds the letter “s” after the word "cycle".

Correction: This research was done in one cycle.

### 3) Substitution of Plural to Singular

Data 1: The researcher used observation class, interview, questionnaire, and some supportive instrument such as field notes and documents.

The example showed that the student substituted the form of plural to singular. The word “instrument” should be written “instruments” because in the sentence above there is a word that shows a plural form, the word before "instrument" shows a plural form so that the word "instrument" is not a word that fits to the sentence, because the word "instrument" is a singular form.

Correction: The researcher used observation class, interview, questionnaire, and some supportive instruments such as field notes and documents.

Data 2: In this study, the lecturer had two kind of test to assess the students’ comprehension.

The example showed that the student substituted the form of plural to singular. The word “kind” and “test” should be written “kinds” and “tests” because in the sentence above there is a word that shows a plural form, the word before "kind" and “tests” shows a plural form so that the word "kind" and “test” are not the word that fit to the sentence because the word "kind" and “test” is the singular form.

Correction: In this study, the lecturer had two kinds of tests to assess the students’ comprehension.

Data 3: In this study, the students speaking score significantly improved.

The example showed that the student substituted the form of plural to singular. The word “score” should be written “scores” because in the sentence above there is a word that shows a plural form, the word before "score" shows a plural form so that the word "score" is not a word that fits to the sentence, because the word "score" is a singular form.

Correction: In this study, the students speaking scores significantly improved.

The errors were 116 items (67.05%) of omission of article, 35 items (20.23%) of substitution singular to plural, 16 items (9.24%) of disagreement of subject and tenses, 4 item (2.31%) of substitution singular to plural, 1 item (0.67%) of omission of to be, and 1 item (0.57%) of omission of main verb. Moreover, the most grammatical errors found in the

abstracts at English language education students at the University of Islam Malang was omission of article with 116 items or (67.05%).

Information obtained from a deeper analysis of the literature revealed the three main sources of error as follows:

First, interlingual transfer is the major source of causing the error. Harmer (1990) stated that the first language acquisition commonly influences the students' in acquiring their second language. The way it influences in a process of acquiring their second language or foreign language may be indirect, in which the learner cannot differ the pattern and rules of those languages. Example, "In this study, the lecturer had two kind of test to assess the students' comprehension." The Example showed the student's first language influenced the student's second language exactly English language. It showed that the student cannot differ the rule of plural from of his first language and his second language. The student was familiar with his first language and lead to his second language because in Indonesian there is no specific rule of plural from, but in English is different, we need to add the letter s after the noun if it is the plural from. So it can be concluded that point out both differences and similarities of the pattern and rules between the students' first language and the second language should be considered in writing and grammar class.

Second, limited knowledge of English grammar is another crucial source of error. Weigle (2002) stated that very limited knowledge of English grammar leads the writers to commit errors. The finding shows that the student's knowledge of English grammar are low because the students made some errors in their abstracts exactly in omission of article. As the researcher found in the finding, omission of article became the highest error in their abstract of *skirpsi*. One of the examples is "The instrument in this research was giving test". The example showed that the student omitted the article "A" before the word "test". The findings showed that the students' knowledge of English grammar need to be improved exactly in terms of article.

Third, carelessness: carelessness is also one of the causes of errors that often occur, the students made carelessness by making errors repeatedly with the same errors. Example from abstract 5, data 1: "The researcher used mind mapping technique as a media", data 2: "The researcher concludes that the students of seventh grade can improve their writing ability through mind mapping technique", and data 3: "This research was undertaken in order to improve students' ability in writing a descriptive text by using mind mapping technique". The examples showed that the student made the same errors repeatedly, the students omitted the



article before the word “mind” in data 1, 2, and 3. Raising the students’ awareness of the disadvantages of carelessness may help them to reduce the errors in their writing especially in abstract writing. The students need to pay attention to other sources that may lead to a serious error.

In this study, the finding data are described that omission of article was the highest errors which occur in the abstract of *skripsi* that made by English language education students at the University of Islam Malang. According to Leacock et al. (2010), articles are ideal targets for automatic error detection because they are among the most frequent of English learner errors. Master (2002) said that the article *the* is shown to be the frequent word in English and *a* to be fifth most frequent words. Kim & Lakhsmana (2007) also said that learners need more time to acquire the article system than any other grammatical form. The error that occurs was possibly caused by carelessness, the students did not pay more attention to the use of article and they also repeated the same mistakes of omission of the article in their writing abstract *skripsi*.

Besides the omission of the article error, the errors that often occur in students’ writing abstract of *skripsi* were substitution of plural to singular. It was possibly caused by limited knowledge of English grammar. This error occurs because the students have limited knowledge in terms of singular and plural forms.

The errors performed were also caused by several factors which happened in their learning process. One of the factors is interlingual transfer, interlingual transfer occurs because the students are familiar with their first language and lead to their second language (Brown, 2007).

The current finding is not in line with all of the previous studies finding. Hasan & Munandar (2018) found that the most frequently occurring errors misinformation of verbal (30 errors) and omission of article (19 errors) be the third most frequently occurring errors in terms of linguistic category according to Dulay et al. (1982). While Sari & Sinaga (2020) found that there are 247 errors (89.2%) of past tense, and 14 errors (5.0%) of define article, and 10 errors (3.6%) of third singular verb. Which means the highest error made by students in terms of linguistic category is past tenses error. And in the current study, the researcher found that the highest error made by students is omission of article with 116 errors (67.05%).

From all the findings of the previous research and this research, an analysis of grammatical errors in writing the abstract of *skripsi* made by English language education students 2017/2018 academic year at the University of Islam Malang, it was eventually revealed that the main problem of students who learned English as their second language was

limited knowledge of English grammar because students made some types of grammatical errors exactly in linguistic category in their writings. The students commonly considered that what they had known was enough, whereas, they still made some errors in their writings as the findings that found in all the previous research and the current research.

## CONCLUSSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The conclusion of this study were all based on the findings. There were six types of grammatical errors in writing the abstract of *skripsi* made by students of English language education those were omission of article, substitution singular to plural, substitution to plural to singular, disagreement of subject and tenses, omission of to be, and omission of main verb. The frequencies of each grammatical error in writing the abstract of *skripsi* made by students of English language education were 116 items (67.05%) of omission of article, 35 items (20.23%) of substitution singular to plural, 16 items (9.24%) of disagreement of subject and tenses, 4 item (2.31%) of substitution singular to plural, 1 item (0.67%) of omission of to be, and 1 item (0.57%) of omission of main verb.

The sources of the grammatical errors in writing the abstract of *skripsi* made by students of English language education were interlingual transfer, limited knowledge of English grammar, and carelessness. The findings of this study showed that although students have learned English grammar for about 4 years in the University they still have the possibility to make an error in terms of grammar because they still produced some of grammatical errors in their writings abstracts of *skripsi*

The researcher gave some suggestions for the lecturers, the students, and future researchers. For the lecturers of English language education, it is known that the students still have the problem in producing the English grammar in their abstract of *skripsi*. Thus, it is important for the lecturers to focus on teaching grammar and writing skill to the students in the university. In avoiding the difficulties in learning English, the lecturer should give more grammatical exercises both of spoken and written, so they will not face the problems in their learning process.

For the students of English language education, the researcher expects to the students that they will pay more attention in using English grammar. The students are expected to do writing exercises and make a peer feedback before publishing their writings.

For future researchers, the researcher hopes to the future researchers that they can prepare everything as good as possible in doing the research and also can follow up this research. Besides, the researcher hopes this finding of the study can inspire the next

researchers to conduct other researches related to the grammatical errors analysis to enrich the exiting studies.

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