

ENGLISH GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THE ABSTRACT SECTION OF  
CIVIL ENGINEERING STUDENTS' THESIS, DIPONEGORO UNIVERSITY

Wahyu Hidayati, Suharno

S1 Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, Universitas Diponegoro  
Jl. Prof. Soedarto, S.H., Tembalang, 50269

**ABSTRACT**

*Academic writing* adalah sebuah kegiatan atau aktivitas menulis sebuah karya menggunakan bahasa yang formal dan menggunakan sudut pandang orang ketiga. *Academic writing* memiliki tiga bagian yang berbeda yaitu pengenalan masalah, isi, dan kesimpulan. Salah satu contoh dari *academic writing* adalah abstrak. Abstrak merupakan rangkuman/ intisari dari sebuah dokumen yang memiliki lima bagian penting yaitu latar belakang masalah, tujuan, metode, hasil, dan kesimpulan.

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mendeskripsikan kesalahan gramatikal yang dibuat oleh mahasiswa Teknik Sipil, Universitas Diponegoro dalam menyusun abstrak untuk tugas akhir mereka. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menjelaskan tentang faktor terjadinya kesalahan-kesalahan tersebut. Dalam penelitian ini, penulis menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif. Populasi dalam penelitian ini adalah 5 abstrak yang diambil dari tugas akhir yang dibuat oleh mahasiswa Teknik Sipil Undip dari berbagai tahun.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kesalahan gramatikal yang terdapat dalam abstrak tersebut adalah berupa *Omission*, *Addition*, *Misformation*, dan *Misordering*. Hal tersebut dikarenakan oleh beberapa faktor yaitu: *carelessness*, *first language interference*, dan *translation*. Kesalahan yang paling dominan dalam penelitian ini adalah pada kategori *Misformation* (20 kesalahan) sedangkan kesalahan yang paling sedikit terjadi adalah pada kategori *Misordering* (1 kesalahan).

Keywords: *academic writing*, abstrak

**1. Introduction**

Language is a means of communication which plays an important role in human life. As a social being, people cannot be separated from language since they need to communicate with others with a language as the medium. One of the

international languages used until now is English. In this case, English as a means of communication has the most important role. Obviously English has dominated world communication in both speaking and writing. Since English is important it must be learnt by the learners.

English is a foreign language in Indonesia. It means English is not used for daily communication. As the foreign language, the learners of English always make mistakes and errors in their learning process. Norrish (1983: 7) differentiates anomalous language behaviour into three terms: error, mistake, and lapse. Error is a such systematic deviation which occurs when the learner has not learned something of the language and gets it wrong constantly, because he has not learned the correct form. Mistake is such an inconsistent deviation that the learner has noticed or been taught, yet he sometimes learned it right, the other time he uses the wrong form. Lapse is caused by the miss-concentration, short memory, and fatigue. Lapse does not really relate to the fact that the language has not been taught or learned or is being learned.

It is normal for anyone who learns the foreign language for making mistakes and errors because it is different from his/her mother tongue. Littlewood in Wardhana (2002: 2) stated that errors might enrich learners' knowledge about the language they are learning, because when making errors they are actually learning something from them.

There are four basic abilities which are learned in studying English: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Writing is one of the skills that must be learned by the students. In writing, the learners must apply the five general

components of the writing process: content, form, mechanic, style and grammar. Grammar is an important part in writing because grammar organizes the language, so that the meaning of a sentence can be clear and easy to understand. Grammar is an explanation of how the forms of word can be changeable and united into sentences in a language. Thus, to be able to use proper language, a language learner needs to study the grammar, so the language product can be grammatically acceptable.

In academic writing especially, students are required to make the sentences that are grammatically correct. It is because academic writing serves the accurate information and data that can be verified. One of the types of academic writing is abstract. Abstract is a brief summary from document content that consists of the important parts of the writing, and describes the content and scope of the writing.

In this essay the writer would like to analyze grammatical errors produced by civil engineering students, Diponegoro University in making abstract for their final project or thesis. The writer wants to know what kind of errors are mostly made by the students on grammar.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

This chapter explains about theoretical frame work, which consists of the definition of writing, the definition of abstract, the definition of grammar, the meaning of error analysis, the causes of error, and the types of error.

There are many definitions of writing according to many experts. Writing is to make letters or other symbols (ideograph) on a surface. It means that writing is

the representation of language in a textual medium through the use of a set of signs or symbols (known as a writing system).

In Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, abstract is defined as a short piece of writing containing the main ideas in a document (2010 : 6). The purpose of an abstract is to give a reader a brief summary of report. Based on the abstract, the reader will often decide if he or she wants to read the whole report.

An abstract is written after the report is finished and usually contains five elements in the following order: background, purpose, methodology, result, and a conclusion or recommendation.

James E. Purpura (2004: 6) defines grammar as follows:

“Grammar is defined as a systematic way accounting for predicting an ideal speaker's or hearer's knowledge of the language. This is done by a set of rules or principles that can be used to generate all well-formed or grammatical utterances in the language.”

Grammar does not only affect how units of language are combined in order to look right, it also affects their meaning. The meaning of a grammatical structure may be quite difficult to teach. It is fairly simple to explain that the addition of a plural –s to the noun in English indicates that you are talking about more than one item, and there are parallels in other language.

According to James (1998: 1), error analysis is the process of concluding the occurrence, nature, reasons and effect of unsuccessful language. The error which are identified and analyzed are aimed to make the second language learners aware of not doing the same errors. Furthermore, error analysis is concerned with the explanation of how grammatical structure or rules are being violated, and how to correct them. It is important to analyze the error made by language learners

because those errors will be such a constructive input of language learning process for learners.

Norrish (1987: 8) classifies causes of error into three types: carelessness, first language interference, and translation. The three types of causes of error will be discussed briefly below.

1). *Carelessness*. It is often closely related to lack of motivation. Many teachers will admit that it is not always the student's fault if he loses interest, perhaps the materials and/or style of presentation do not suit him.

2). *First language interference*. Norrish states that learning a language (a mother tongue or a foreign language) is a matter of habit formation. When someone tries to learn new habits, the old ones will interfere the new ones. This cause of error is called first language interference.

3). *Translation*. It is one of the causes of error. This happens because a student translates his first language sentence or idiomatic expression in to the target language word by word. This cause of error is closely related to the previous cause of error: first language interference. When student or someone try to translate the first language into the target language, the first language will interfere the target language in their translation. This is probably the most common cause of error.

According to Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982: 155) as quoted by Haryono (2011:6), there are four types of errors based on the surface strategy taxonomy: omission, addition, misformation and misordering.

a. Omission

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of items that must be present in a well-formed utterance.

b. Addition

Addition errors are the opposite of omission errors. They are characterized by the presence of an item which must not be present in a well-formed utterance.

c. Misformation

Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the unacceptable forms of the morpheme or structure. While in omission errors the item is not supplied at all, in misformation errors the learner supplies something, although it is incorrect.

d. Misordering Errors

The incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance characterized misordering error. Misordering errors occur systematically for both first language and second language learners.

**3. Discussion**

To know the description of the grammar errors in civil engineering students' abstract, the writer identify the grammar errors and classify them into four aspects: Omission, Addition, Misformation, and Misordering.

No.	Identification of Error	Classification of Error	Reconstruction of Error
1.	Tests performed on each type of aggregate on the same treatment conditions both for the preparation of specimens of <u>bonding strength, compressive</u>		Tests performed on each type of aggregate on the same treatment conditions both for the preparation of specimens of <u>bonding strength</u> and

	<u>strength</u> of aggregate concrete. Mixture design using <i>methode</i> of DOE (Department of Environment). (A. 4)	Omission of conjunction Spelling	<u>compressive strength</u> of aggregate concrete. Mixture design using <i>method</i> of DOE (Department of Environment). (A. 4)
2.	Because of that, <i>some road in the Semarang</i> such as Jalan Citarum, Ronggowarsito, Imam Bonjol, Jalan Yos Sudarso, Empu Tantular, Raden Patah and many others with same problem, suffer damages faster than roads without that problem. (E. 2)	Misformation Addition	Because of that, <i>some roads in Semarang</i> such as Jalan Citarum, Ronggowarsito, Imam Bonjol, Jalan Yos Sudarso, Empu Tantular, Raden Patah and many others with same problem, suffer damages faster than roads without that problem. (E. 2)
3.	Jasa Raharja's office building structure <u>design</u> by using the concept of Special Moment Frame System (SMFS). (B. 2)	Misformation	Jasa Raharja's office building structure <u>is design</u> by using the concept of Special Moment Frame System (SMFS). (B. 2)
4.	<u>Process production</u> of making steel reinforcement <i>give</i> a negative impact on the environment, such as the burning of the result effects of greenhouse gases, air pollution, hazardous chemicals and waste energy. (D. 2)	Misordering Misformation	<u>Production process</u> of making steel reinforcement <i>gives</i> a negative impact on the environment, such as the burning of the result effects of greenhouse gases, air pollution, hazardous chemicals and waste energy. (D. 2)

The most common errors in this research are in the category of misformation error dealing with the tenses in English grammar. In this research, the writer found

the pattern that most of the error were made: subject and verb agreement. The writer or sentence producer often produce the sentences that the subject and the verb are not grammatically acceptable. This kind of pattern appeared in the most of the error sentences.

Generally, the content of the abstracts made by students of civil engineering, Diponegoro University can be understood clearly and didn't make the reader confused about what they want to deliver. Although there are some errors in grammar, it doesn't make the reader have their own assumption or hypothesis about the content. Those errors didn't change the whole understanding and meaning of the abstract.

#### **4. Conclusion**

According to the explanation in previous section, the writer conclude that the grammar errors made by civil engineering students, Diponegoro University in making abstract are 4 errors or 14.28% in the category of Omission, 3 errors or 10.71% in the category of Addition, 20 errors or 71.42% in the category of Misformation, and 1 error or 3.57% in the category of Misordering. The most errors happened in the category of Misformation because it is related to the tenses that most of students are having difficulties.



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