
Grammatical Errors in Indonesian Journal: A Case of Nursing Research

Article Abstracts

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Abstract

Despite the existence of many studies on the analysis of grammatical errors in writing, little scholarly work reports the errors in academic articles, especially in medical journals. To fill this empirical gap, the present study investigates grammatical errors within written English abstracts of academic articles from a nursing journal in Indonesia. In particular, it attempts to classify the errors based on a surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay et al. (1982), namely misformation, omission, addition, and misordering. The method used is content analysis. The results of this study indicate that the number of misformation errors is found to be 36.76% of all total errors. Next, in the category of omission were identified 35.29% of all errors. In addition, the number of errors under the category of addition is 16.18%. The last error is from the misordering category, which has 11.76% of the total errors. Further, we noted that the most commonly found errors were in the category of misformation followed by omission, addition, and misordering. The implications of this research are expected to serve as a reference for future scholars when avoiding errors in writing English abstracts for academic articles.



Keywords: Abstract, grammatical errors, nursing, scientific article

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1. Introduction

With the use of English as the language of science and technology, journals in Indonesia have implemented its use in the writing of many scientific articles, and certainly in their abstracts. The abstract is a critical component of a scientific publication and is critical in identifying the basic content of the study within contemporary academic communities (Chalak & Norouzi, 2013). Abstracts also crucially determine “whether the readers would find the research paper relevant or not with their research” (Kurniawan & Sabila, 2021, p.318). Alhuqbani (2013) has argued, for instance, that many potentially good research articles are overlooked because their abstracts have been written carelessly. Writing abstracts in English, part of academic writing, is meant to break the language barrier and to administer global distribution of the insights presented in the articles. Therefore, in the academic writing process it is crucially important to employ standard English, including the use of accurate grammatical rules. Grounded in the theory of Dulay et al. (1982), we categorized errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering; grammatical errors are frequently formed by language learners in their writing.

The importance and significance of studies on grammatical errors in writing has been illustrated by previous research (see Agustina & Junining, 2015; Floranti & Adiantika, 2019; Hasan & Munandar, 2018; Islam & Mufidah, 2022; Kharmilah & Narius, 2019; Mohammed & Abdalhussein, 2015; Novita, 2014; Setiyorini et al., 2020; Sinaga & Ramadhani, 2020; Wulandari & Harida, 2021; Yudari, 2017). Novita (2014), for example, examines grammatical errors in the writing of first year English students in an Indonesian university. The results indicated that misformation was found to be the most frequent category among all error types. In addition, research conducted by Yudari (2017) on a grammatical error analysis of recount text of students in an Islamic school also revealed a high number of misformation errors. Further, Hasan and Munandar (2018) conducted a similar analysis by examining students in a writing class at a state university in Indonesia, which resulted in a similar conclusion with misformation being the most frequent type of error performed by the students. Furthermore, research administered by Kharmilah and Narius (2019) on students’

writing assignments in a state university in Indonesia also indicated that misformation ranked as the top error type among the error categories proposed by Dulay et al. (1982).

This previous literature indicates that misformation errors are the most frequently identified errors in respondents' writing. Although numerous scholars have conducted analyses of grammatical errors on various types of writing, little research reports on errors found in academic articles, especially those in medical journals. To fill this empirical gap, the present study investigates grammatical errors in abstracts, written in English, of academic articles from a nursing journal in Indonesia. To study this phenomenon, the researchers endeavoured to address the following research question: what type of grammatical errors are present in abstracts of research papers in a nursing journal in Indonesia? This study is beneficial to English learners, especially scholars as their reference to avoid errors in writing English abstracts for research articles.

2. Literature Review

Error analysis has been a frequent topic of research in the field of applied linguistics. Scholars define error analysis (hereafter, EA) as the technique which is concerned with examining almost all errors made by second language learners, including those resulting from first language transfer (i.e., interlingual factors) as well as those that cannot be traced back to influence from the learner's native language (Dulay et al., 1982). Crystal (2003) defines error analysis as a technique for identifying, classifying, and systematically interpreting the errors that second language learners make while performing oral or written tasks using any of the linguistic principles and procedures.

The function of error analysis is to identify and classify errors made by language learners in order to understand the underlying processes and patterns of their language acquisition. However, error analysis also recognizes that errors can be influenced by various factors such as the learners' first language, the complexity of the target language, and the teaching and learning environment. Furthermore, error analysis aims to identify the sources and causes of errors, which can include intralingual errors (resulting from the learner's lack of knowledge or understanding of the target language), interlingual errors (resulting from interference or transfer from the learner's first language), and developmental errors (reflecting the natural progression of language acquisition) (Purinanda & Sutrisno, 2022). Furthermore, error analysis of student writing has been shown to offer a lot of advantages to instructors. For example, if the sources of error in language learning are identified, the teachers can easily prepare remedial teaching designs (Mohammed & Abdalhussein, 2015). Furthermore, Chan (2004) also argued that researching error analysis would allow for a better understanding of students' linguistic deficiency, which can then be used to inform instructors, syllabus designers, and textbook writers on how to address certain problems.

In addition to identifying and classifying errors, the theoretical framework delves into the underlying processes and patterns of language acquisition. It acknowledges the influence of various factors such as the learners' first language, the complexity of the target language, and the teaching environment on error production. Furthermore, the framework seeks to uncover the sources and causes of errors, including intralingual errors, interlingual errors, and developmental errors, thereby shedding light on the natural progression of language acquisition.

Dulay et al.'s theoretical framework on error analysis provides a comprehensive understanding of language learners' errors. It emphasizes the systematic nature of errors and their potential to reveal insights into the development of the interlanguage system. The framework operates on the premise that errors are not random, but rather reflect the underlying rules and patterns of the learner's evolving language system. Moreover, Dulay et al. stresses the significance of error analysis in not only identifying and classifying errors, but also in providing valuable insights into the learner's interlanguage development. These insights, in turn, can inform effective teaching strategies tailored to address the specific needs and challenges of language learners.

The errors which are most frequently found in writing by language learners are grammatical errors. Grammatical errors are broadly defined as errors concerning the structure of sentences in a learner's text. Dulay et al. (1982) offers a taxonomy of grammatical errors which consist of four principal categories. First, errors of misformation are marked by the use of wrong morphemes and structures where the user is using one grammatical form in place of another grammatical form, for example the incompatibility between the subject and predicate. Second, omission errors refer to the type of errors that happen when learners lack a form or grammar that is supposed to be present in a sentence, such as the absence of an article, subject or verb. Third, errors of addition refer to the presence of an item that should not appear in a well-formed utterance, for instance the addition of "-ing" in "to infinitive" word. The insertion of unnecessary elements or words disrupts the grammatical structure of the sentence. Fourth, errors of misordering happen where the elements presented are correct but wrongly sequenced, including misordering in word order (for instance, position of noun and adjective). This misordering error will create confusion or ambiguity.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This research is carried out qualitatively (Gay et al., 2012; Nunan, 2010) by employing content analysis. This method is employed to analyse the content of the text objectively and systematically (Titscher et al., 2000). The data are Indonesian abstracts of scientific articles translated into English. When teaching nursing students, the researchers found some errors

in their English abstract translation. The abstracts are taken from one issue of a nursing journal, published by a reputable university in Indonesia, resulting in a total of 9 abstracts. The journal is justifiably selected because of its good reputation and accreditation. The data from the Indonesian version are then compared with the English version. The comparison is administered to observe and identify the grammatical errors made during the translation phase. The identified findings are then classified based on surface strategy taxonomy pioneered by Dulay et al. (1982). The categories proposed consist of four error types, namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. After all of the identification stage is completed, the results are then interpreted.

3.2. Data Collection

The function of data collection in this study was to gather nursing abstracts from published articles by nursing students and identify incorrect clauses. The following actions were taken by the researchers when gathering the data:

- a. Gathering nursing abstracts from their published article. The researchers selected and collected the abstracts from 9 published articles in a nationally accredited journal written by nursing students.
- b. Reading the nursing students' abstracts in their entirety. The researchers read the texts after collecting them to identify any incorrect clauses.
- c. Recognizing the incorrect clauses. The researchers selected the sentences with incorrect phrases.
- d. Highlighting the incorrect terms. The researchers highlighted the incorrect language in the selected clauses.

3.3. Data Analysis

The researchers did data analysis by categorizing the incorrect phrases, providing appropriate replacements, and making judgments on the types of errors made by the nursing students in their abstracts. The steps taken in the data analysis were as follows:

- a. To make the analytic process simpler, the incorrect phrases were categorized using the surface strategy taxonomy by Dulay et al. (1982) and placed in the table.
- b. Providing the appropriate clauses that should replace the incorrect clauses in the texts.
- c. Making judgments. The writer transformed the analysis's findings into a percentage after calculating and organizing the errors.

4. Finding and Discussion

4.1. Finding

Misformation errors are found as the error type which the authors had trouble dealing with and frequently performed in their writing. As presented in Table 1 and Diagram 1, there are

68 errors made by authors in their translated abstracts of nursing articles. The number of misformation errors is found to be 25, or 36.76% of all total errors. Next, in the category of omission, 24 errors were identified, or 35.29% of all errors. After that, the number of errors under the category of addition is 11 errors or equivalent to 16.18%. The last error is from the misordering category, which has 8 errors or 11.76% of the total errors.

Table 1. The number of errors and the types in the nursing research articles

Data	Type of Error				Total
	Omission	Addition	Misformation	Misordering	
Abstract 1	4	0	4	0	8
Abstract 1	4	0	4	0	8
Abstract 2	5	0	2	3	10
Abstract 3	2	1	2	1	6
Abstract 4	4	0	1	0	5
Abstract 5	1	1	7	1	10
Abstract 6	3	6	2	1	12
Abstract 7	1	1	0	2	4
Abstract 8	1	2	5	0	8
Abstract 9	3	0	2	0	5
Total	24	11	25	8	68

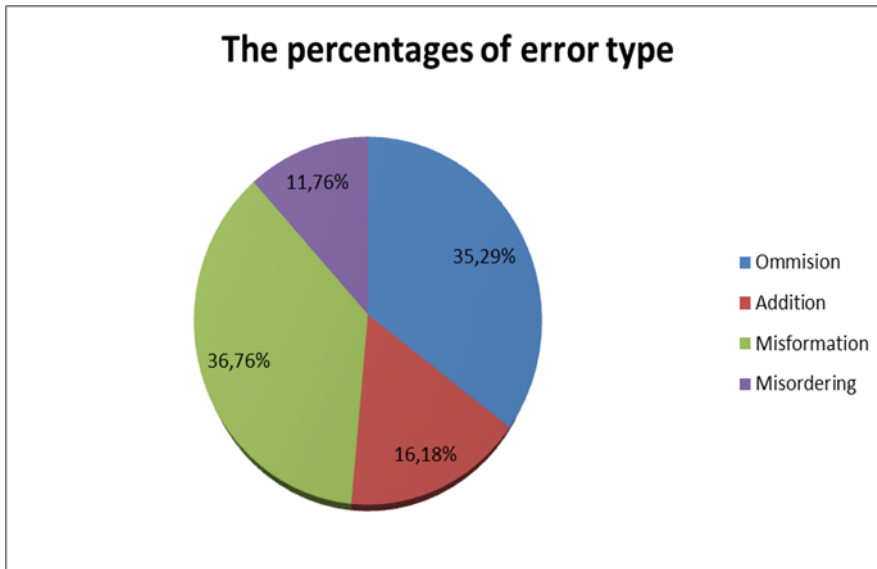


Figure 1. The Percentages of Error Types in the Nursing Research Article

4.1.1. Misformation

The incorrect use of morphemes or grammatical structures in Indonesian-to-English translation is a grammatical error that could transpire during the translation process. This occurs because of the difference between morphological or grammatical structures between the source language (Indonesian) and the target language (English). Below, in Table 2, are the grammatical errors in the form of misformation found in the nursing journal abstracts:

Table 2. Examples of grammatical errors in the classification of misformation

Source Language	Target Language	Reconstruction	Remarks
Kedua penyakit tersebut...	...Both of them <u>is</u>Both of them <u>are</u> ...	The incompatibility between the subject and predicate/verb
...sampel sebanyak 59 orang...	...sample are 59 people...	...samples were 59 people...	The absence of -s in the plural noun
...karya ilmiah ini menggunakan...	...this scientific paper use...	...this scientific paper uses ...	The absence of -s on the third-person singular verb

In accordance with the data above, one identified error is the incompatibility (disagreement) between the subject and the predicate. For example, in "...Both of them is...", the error lies on the plural subject both of them; thus, the predicate that is compatible is are. Therefore, the quotation shall be constructed into "...Both of them are..." Other errors that are related to grammatical structure are errors concerning the absence of the -s on plural nouns. For instance, "...sample are 59" people..." Therefore, in the process of construction to make them plural, the singular nouns should be added with the inflected -s to make them into plural nouns. This could be seen from the reconstructed "...samples were 59 people..." The last error classified is the lack of -s for third-person singular verbs. The data that is found is "...this scientific paper use...", in which the verb use should end with -s because "this scientific paper" is a third-person singular verb. Thus, after being properly constructed, it should read, "...this scientific paper uses..."

4.1.2. Omission

Table 3 below presents the grammatical errors found in the form of omission error types from the translated nursing journal abstracts.

Table 3. Examples of grammatical errors in the classification of omission

Source Language	Target Language	Reconstruction	Remarks
...metode studi kasus...	... <i>case study method</i> <i>a case study method</i> ...	The absence of an article
...Pola diet tidak sehat pada masyarakat perkotaan merupakan salah satu faktor risiko penyakit tidak menular...	... <i>Unhealthy diet urban society as one of risk factor noncommuni cable disease</i> <i>Unhealthy diet on urban society is one of factors causing risk for noncommunicable disease</i> ...	The absence of predicate

In accordance with the data above, grammatical errors with the classification of omission include the absence of articles in a sentence. For example, "...case study method..."; this is incorrect because it does not use proper articles. When it is constructed correctly with articles, it should read "...a case study method..." The next grammatical errors in the classification of omission are the absence of predicates. For instance, "...unhealthy diet urban society as one of risk factor noncommunicable disease..." The absence of predicates transpires in active and passive sentences, especially in the form of the to be verb or the predicate. Therefore,

this could be constructed into proper grammatical order, “...unhealthy diet on urban society is one of factors causing risk for noncommunicable disease...” There is an addition of is that functions as a predicate because there is an absence of predicates in the original quotation.

4.1.3. Addition

The presence of certain elements that do not match the acceptable grammatical usage of those structures in English were also found in the nursing journal’s abstracts. The data for this error type are presented below in Table 4:

Table 4. An example of grammatical errors in the classification of addition

Source Language	Target Language	Reconstruction	Remarks
...pemberian dukungan informasional terhadap pasien...	...to providing informational support to patients...	[1] [2] ...to provide informational support to patients...	The addition of -ing in to infinitive word

According to the data above, the use of to providing from the data is incorrect. The addition of -ing should be omitted because in the context of to infinitive there should not be an addition of -ing for the verb. Thus, the sentence “...to providing informational support to patients...” should be constructed into the proper grammatical form as “...to provide informational support to patients...”.

4.1.4. Misordering

The structure of morphemes in each language allows the possibility of differences across various languages. As an example, sentences in Indonesian are composed with a subject + predicate + object order. On the other hand, in Hindi, a subject + object - predicate order is used. Meanwhile, in the grammatical principle of English, a sentence must at least consist of a subject and predicate. In other words, misordering is characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance.

Table 5. An example of grammatical errors in the classification of misordering

Source Language	Target Language	Reconstruction	Remarks
		n	

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan ada penurunan bermakna kondisi <u>depresi</u> <u>lansia</u> <u>harga diri</u> <u>rendah</u> ...	<i>The results showed significant decrease of elderly depression low self-esteem ...</i>	<i>The results showed significant decrease in depression of low self-esteem in elderly</i>	Missordering in word order (position of noun and adjective)
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Before fixing the order, the usual preposition that follows the noun “decrease” is in. Next, self-esteem is also hyphenated (-). The better order could be a significant decrease in depression of low self-esteem in elderly. The position of elderly is at the end to show that its function as a noun. We may also use other lexical items rather than elderly, such as older adults.

4.2. Discussion

To further examine the findings from the present research, this section interprets the results from the data analysis that was conducted. Moreover, this discussion confirms and aligns with the findings of previous studies and theories.

As found in this study, among the four types of grammatical errors proposed by Dulay et al. (1982), misformation is found to be the most common error in nursing research articles' abstracts. Therefore, this finding confirms and supports the findings found in the previous studies (see Hasan & Munandar 2018; Kharmilah & Narius, 2019; Novita, 2014; Yudari 2017). For example, Novita (2014) stated that the errors performed by students are mostly caused by intralingual factors, such as the complexity of learning English as foreign language in addition to their native language, Indonesian. Other than claiming that misformation is the most common error found in students' writing, this research is also comparable to Novita (2014) in terms of the factor causing the error. The findings in this research show that the error is caused by the interference of students' first language and also their lack of understanding of English. In the same vein, the findings in this research affirm the conclusion presented by Yudari (2017), who analysed grammatical errors of recount text of students in an Islamic school. Yudari similarly identified a high number of misformation errors in students' writing. In addition, Hasan and Munandar (2018) also found that misformation errors ranked as the top error type among the error categories proposed by Dulay et al. (1982). The errors they identified were also largely caused by mother tongue interference and overgeneralization.

Contrastively, the findings of previous research are not always consistent with the current findings. For instance, Islam and Mufidah (2022) found that omission was the highest frequency of errors made by the students included in their study. The second type of error is addition followed by misformation and misordering. Additionally, Sinaga and Ramadhani

(2020) conducted a study in identifying grammatical errors in students' narrative writing. They found that students have difficulty in grammar mastery and are confused to distinguish verbs. The finding also indicated that students mostly made errors in the four types of errors, namely, omission, addition, misformation, and misordering categories. Similarly, Agustina and Junining (2015) analyzed grammatical errors in the writing of English education students in one of the state universities in Indonesia. The results showed a similar conclusion that omission was the most dominant error type found in the data. However, in this study found that omission is the second common error in the nursing research article abstract and followed by addition.

The least frequent error in this study falls under the misordering category. Which is consistent with findings from previous studies (see Agustina & Junining, 2015; Floranti & Adiantika, 2019; Hasan & Munandar, 2018; Islam & Mufidah, 2022; Kharmilah & Narius, 2019; Novita, 2014; Setiyorini, et al, 2020; Sinaga, & Ramadhani, 2020; Wulandari & Harida, 2021; Yudari, 2017). For example, Floranti and Adiantika (2019) investigated the grammatical error performances in Indonesia EFL learners' writing. They found that the lowest percentage of errors was in the category of misordering. Similarly, Kharmilah and Narius (2019) conducted an error analysis in writing discussion text made by Indonesian university students. They also found that misordering was the least frequent error type.

Guided by Brook's opinion (Ellis, 1993), the researchers show four possible reasons for the errors made by the research article authors when they write an English abstract. First, they may have not mastered the English structural pattern. This case does not only happen in Indonesia as English a foreign language, but also in English as a second language. In fact, research conducted by Noprival (2022) on English needs in a higher education found that they are still lack of structuring the sentences in English. Second, the correct model has been insufficiently practical. Third, their mother tongue may induce distortion. Fourth, they may follow a general structural rule, though in a way which is not applicable in a particular context. Regardless of their errors in their research article abstracts, what they wrote was still understandable. Also, they were from non-English majors instead of from a health science background. Meaning that their work concerning composing abstracts in English should be appreciated.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results, it is concluded that grammatical errors in English-translated abstracts, analysed using a surface strategy taxonomy, frequently fall under the following categories; misformation, omission, addition, and misordering. Misformation errors include those involving subject-verb agreement, inconsistent tenses, the absence of the suffix "-s" in the plural form, and the absence of "-s" in the predicate (verb) that used the third singular person as a subject. Also, the absence of articles and predicates in the sentences is one of several

errors that fall under the category of omissions. The next grammatical error is in the category of addition, which includes the addition of “-ing” in the verb of “to infinitive” and “-s” (plural) at one part of a singular parallel sentence. Then, the category of misordering is only some in this research. Furthermore, their errors are caused mainly by mother tongue interference and overgeneralization. The findings suggest that further research should be carried out by focusing on developing English grammar teaching guidelines and materials specialized for the translation of scientific article abstracts. Additionally, apart from considering the grammatical errors proposed by Dulay et al. (1982), English users also need to consider grammatical cohesion when using English as recommended by Noprival et al. (2022). More importantly, this research can still be further developed by looking at the lexical errors made in the translation of scientific nursing articles’ abstracts due to its specialized and peculiar vocabularies in different context of the studies.

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