



GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN UNDERGRADUATES' PAPER ABSTRACTS

Deri Fikri Fauzi

English Literature Department of Universitas Putra Indonesia, Indonesia
dare.fikr@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

There are many studies analyzing grammatical errors in writing few scientific papers report errors in scientific articles, especially in undergraduate paper abstracts. To fill this empirical gap, this study examined grammatical errors in written English abstracts of academic articles in an undergraduate paper. In particular, try to classify errors according to the surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), namely malformation, omission, addition, and disorder. The method used is content analysis. Errors occur in malformed categories such as inconsistency in subject-verb, inconsistency in the use of tenses, no "-s" in plural nouns, and no "-s" in predicates (verbs) using the third singular person called subject. There are several types of errors in the omission category, including missing predicates in articles and sentences. The next grammatical error is in the category of addition, which includes the addition of "-ing" in the verb "to infinitive" and "-s" (plural) in one part of a singular parallel sentence. However, misordering categories is only some of the data analysis. Overall, the most commonly found errors were in the category of misformation. In addition, their errors are caused mainly by mother tongue interference and overgeneralization. The findings of this research are expected to serve as a reference for future scholars when avoiding errors in writing English abstracts for academic articles.

KEYWORDS: *grammatical errors, English syntax, paper abstract.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

With the use of English as the language of science and technology, journals in Indonesia have implemented its use in writing scientific articles, at least its 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, 111). Abstract also crucially determines 'whether the readers would find the research paper relevant or not with their research' (Kurniawan & Sabila, 2021, p.318). Besides, Alhuqbani (2013) argues that many potentially good research articles are overlooked because their abstracts have been written carelessly. This procedure is meant to break the language barrier, and to administer the global distribution of the insights presented in the articles. Therefore, in the academic writing process, it is crucially important to use Standard English, including the use of accurate grammatical rules of English. In fact, grammatical errors are frequently found in national scientific articles. Numerous pieces of evidence found in several previous studies, such as the analysis of grammatical errors using the surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982), reveal that the errors commonly performed are omission, addition, misformation, and misordering.

The importance and the significance of studies on grammatical errors in writing have been illustrated by previous research. For example, Novita (2014) examined grammatical errors in the writing of first-year English students at an Indonesian university. The results indicated that misformation was found to be the most frequent category among all error types. 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 misformation was the most dominant error type found in the data. The research conducted by Yudari (2017) on the grammatical error analysis of recount text of students in an Islamic school also revealed a high number of misformation errors. 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, Burt, and Krashen (1982). From the number of research results detailed above, it is notable that the error type most commonly performed in the respondent writings is misformation.

Although numerous researchers have conducted analyses of grammatical errors in various types of writing, only a small number of research reports the errors in academic articles, especially in English Literature Research abstracts. To fill this empirical gap, the present study investigates grammatical errors in abstracts, written in English, of English Literature research abstracts.

2.0 THEORY

Error analysis has been an interesting research topic in the field of applied linguistics. Experts in the field define Error Analysis (EA) as the technique which concerned with almost all errors made by second language learners, including those resulting from first language learning (i.e. interlingual factors) and those that cannot be traced back to the learner's native language (ie. intralingual factors) (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. Corder (1981 in Mohammed & Abdulhussein, 2015) argued that error analysis is important for teachers for shedding light on how learners learn the second language and the strategies they use to learn. It is also important for the teachers as an indicator of student learning. In addition, error analysis is also important for learners because these errors are indicators of learners' hypothesis testing about a second language. Error analysis of the students offers a lot of advantages as argued by the expert in the field. For example, if the sources of error in language learning are identified, the teachers can easily prepare remedial teaching design (Mohammed & Abdalhussein, 2015). Furthermore, Chan (2004) also argued that researching error analysis would have a better understanding of the students' linguistic deficiency which informed the instructors, syllabus designers, and textbook writers to address these problems.

Providing the importance of error analysis, the expert in the field has also offered the theory of linguistics error. The error which is mostly committed by language learners is a grammatical error. Grammatical error is defined as the error committed by the learners in terms of the correct structure of sentences. Dulay et al. (1982) offers the taxonomy of



grammatical errors which consist of four principal ways, such as Omission, Addition (regulation, double marking, simple addition), misinformation (Regulation, Archi-forms, alternating form), and Misordering.

Since error offers a lot of advantages, error analysis has been an interesting research topic in the field of applied linguistics. A lot of growing studies on Error analysis are mainly focused on grammatical errors which have been examined by researchers in different educational contexts (e.i Mohammed & Abdalhussein, 2015). For example, Mohammed and Abdalhussein (2015) investigate the grammatical errors in the writing production of 15 Iraqi students in the faculty of Information System at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. The result indicated that the variety of errors made by Iraqi students can be categorized into tenses, prepositions, articles, active and passive voice, verbs, and morphological errors. But most of the errors were made by the student's preposition error category. These findings supported the previous study conducted by Abushihab, et al. (2014) investigated grammatical errors made by 40 students studying in Jordania. They also found that the errors made by students can be categorized into errors in tenses, errors in the use of prepositions, errors in the use of articles, errors in the use of active and passive forms, and morphological errors. But he found that most errors were made by students in the use of articles.

Within the Indonesian context of studies on grammatical errors, several studies also have been conducted (Floranti & Adiantika, 2019; Setiyorini, et al, 2020; Sinaga, & Ramadhani, 2020; Solikha & Rozak, 2020; Wulandari & Harida, 2021). For example, Solikha and Rozak (2020) conducted a study to identify the grammatical errors committed by eighteen senior high school students in recount text writing. The result showed that verb tenses were mostly made by the students and the type of errors mostly made by the students is omission followed by misformation, addition, and misordering. While the most source of errors is intralingual followed by interlingual. Similarly, 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. The highest frequency of grammatical errors found in this study is using verb tense which is similar to the finding of Solikha and Rozak`s (2020) study.

In this line of research, Setiyorini, et al.S. (2020) analyzed types of grammatical errors found in 20 students' essays. The results show that substitution is the highest percentage of grammatical errors followed by omission, addition, substitution, and permutation. Contrastively, Islam and Mufidah, (2022) in their study found that omission was the highest frequency of errors made by the students. The second type of error is addition followed by misformation and misordering.

As noted above, the study on grammatical errors continues to grow, but we still cannot find any study in the literature addressing the case of English Literature student abstracts error analysis. Accordingly, this study aimed to fill the gap in this area of research by analyzing grammatical errors that Indonesian English Literature scholars make in their abstract of research articles.

3.0 METHOD

This research is carried out qualitatively (Gay et al., 2012; Nunan, 2010) by employing content analysis. This method is employed to analyze the content of the text

objectively and systematically (Titscher et al., 2000). The data are English Literature research abstracts at Universitas Putra Indonesia. The research is administered to observe and identify the grammatical errors made. The identified findings are then classified based on surface strategy taxonomy pioneered by Dulay, Burt, & Krashen (1982). The categories proposed consists of four types namely omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. After all of the identification stage is completed, the results are then interpreted.

4.0 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The misformation comes out as the errors 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 abstracts. The number of blunders under the category of misformation is 25 representing 36,76% of the total errors. Next, in the category of omission is 24 errors or 35,29% of the total 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 research abstracts

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

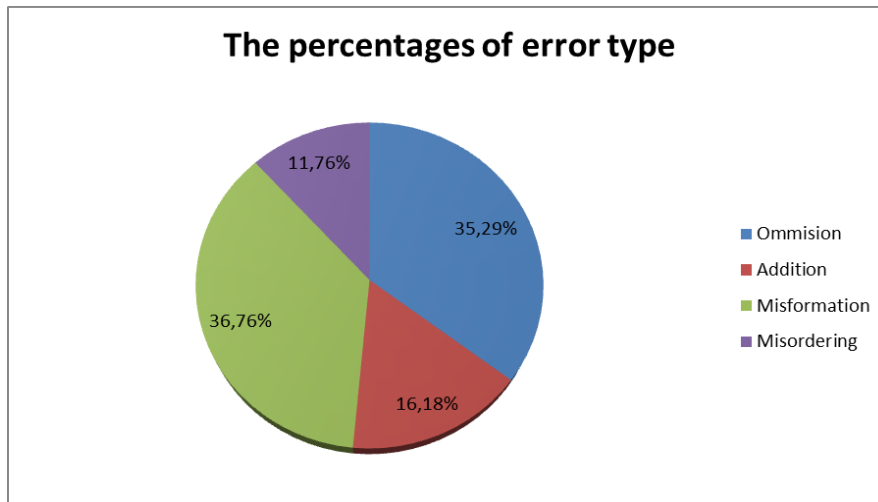


Figure 1: The percentages of error types in the research abstracts.

4.1. 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 3, are the grammatical errors in the form of *misformation* that are found in the abstracts:

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

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
1	... <i>Both of them is</i> ...	...<i>Both of them are</i> ...	The incompatibility between the subject and predicate/verb
2	... <i>This study aims to determine</i> ...	...<i>the study aimed to determine</i> ...	The inconsistency in the use of tense
3	... <i>sample are 59 people...</i>	... <i>samples were 59 people...</i>	The inconsistency in the use of tense
4	... <i>sample is 72...</i>	... <i>samples were 72...</i>	The inconsistency in the use of tense
5	... <i>The sample of this research are 28...</i>	... <i>the samples of this research were 28...</i>	The inconsistency in the use of tense
6	... <i>The sampling technique is consecutive...</i>	... <i>The sampling technique was consecutive...</i>	The inconsistency in the use of tense
7	... <i>The results showed that factors correlated to the prevention of HIV transmission is age...</i>	... <i>The results showed that factors correlated to the prevention of HIV transmission was age...</i>	The inconsistency in the use of tense
8	... <i>HIV AIDS has threaten...</i>	... <i>HIV AIDS has threatened...</i>	The incompatibility between the subject and predicate/verb

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
9	... <i>sample are 59 people</i>...	...<i>samples were 59 people</i> ...	The absence of -s in the plural noun
10	... <i>55% respondent had</i>...	...<i>55% respondents had</i> ...	The absence of -s in the plural noun
11	... <i>sample is 72</i>...	...<i>samples were 72</i> ...	The absence of -s in the plural noun
12	... <i>the sample of this research</i> ...	...<i>the samples of this research</i> ...	The absence of -s in the plural noun
1	... <i>this scientific paper use</i>...	...<i>this scientific paper uses</i> ...	The absence of -s on the third-person singular verb

In accordance with the data above, the 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*...” The same case also applies for “...*HIV AIDS has threaten*...” since there is incompatibility between the subject and the predicate *threaten* that is supposed to be past participle, which is *threatened* for a present perfect tense sentence. Thus, if constructed properly, the sentence should read “...*HIV AIDS has threatened*...”

The other errors that are found are inconsistencies in the use of tenses. This could be seen from the data below:

...*This study aims to determine* ...
 ...*sample are 59 people*...
 ...*sample is 72*...
 ...*The sample of this research are 28*...
 ...*The sampling technique is consecutive*...
 ...*The results showed that factors correlated to the prevention of HIV transmission is age*...

As shown in the data above, there is an inconsistency in the use of tenses, especially between the present tense and past tense. Therefore, after being constructed with the proper grammatical structure, the quotations should read:

...*the study aimed to determine* ...
 ...*samples were 59 people*...
 ...*samples were 72*...
 ...*the samples of this research were 28*...
 ...*The sampling technique was consecutive*...
 ...*The results showed that factors correlated to the prevention of HIV transmission was age*...

Other errors that are related to grammatical structure are errors concerning the absence of the -s on plural nouns, as seen from the data below:

...*sample are 59 people*...
 ...*55% respondent had*...
 ...*sample is 72*...



...the sample of this research ...

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 data below:

...samples were 59 people...

...55% respondents had...

...samples were 72...

...the samples of this research ...

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...*”.

4.2. Omission

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

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

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
1	... <i>case study method...</i>	... <u>a</u> <i>case study method...</i>	The absence of an article
2	... <i>higher family support make impact higher compliance...</i>	...The higher family support, the higher compliance...	The absence of the article <i>the</i> double comparative
3	... <i>Unhealthy diet urban society as one of risk factor noncommunicable disease...</i>	... <i>Unhealthy diet on urban society is one of factors causing risk for noncommunicable disease...</i>	The absence of predicate
4	... <i>Data collected from questionnaires and observation sheets...</i>	... <i>Data were collected through questionnaires and observation sheets...</i>	The absence of <i>to be</i> verb
5	... <i>so it necessary...</i>	... <i>so it <u>is</u> necessary...</i>	The absence of <i>to be</i> verb
6	... <i>Data collection with Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)...</i>	... <i>Data <u>were</u> collected through Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)...</i>	The absence of <i>to be</i> verb

In accordance with the data above, the grammatical errors in the classification of *omission* are the absence of articles in a sentence. This could be observed from these sample (quotations) below from the data:

...*case study method...*

...*higher family support make impact higher compliance...*

The quotations above are grammatically incorrect because they do not use proper articles. When they are constructed correctly with articles, they would read:

...a case study method...

...the higher family support, the higher compliance...

The next grammatical errors in the classification of omission are the absence of predicates, which can be observed from the sample quotations below:

...unhealthy diet urban society as one of risk factor noncommunicable disease...

...Data collected from questionnaires and observation sheets...

...so it necessary...

Data collection with Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)

The absence of predicates transpires in active and passive sentences, especially in the form of the *to be* verb or the predicate. Therefore, the quotation above could be constructed into proper grammatical order as written below:

...unhealthy diet on urban society is one of factors causing risk for noncommunicable disease...

In the quotation above, there is an addition of *is* that functions as a predicate because there is an absence of predicates in the original quotation. Furthermore, there is also an addition of *were* as a predicate in the quotations that reads “*data were collected through questionnaires and observation sheets*”. This happens because there is an omission of *were*. The same case also occurs in another sentence with the addition of *is* in the sentence:

...so it is necessary...

Due to the omission of the subject, the addition of ‘*were*’ is also implemented in the quotation below:

...Data were collected through Geriatric Depression Scale (GDS)...

This shall be implemented because of the absence of predicate in the original quotation.

4.3. Addition

The presence of certain elements of words or sentences that do not match the proper grammatical usage of those structures in English were also found in the abstracts. The data for this error type are presented below in Table 4:

Table 4: Examples of grammatical errors in the classification of addition

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
1	...to providing informational support to patients...	[1] [2] ...to provide informational support to patients...	The addition of -ing in to infinitive word
2	...were organizational culture (p= 0.004; CI= 1.831-38.404), communication (p= 0.003; CI = 1.776-14,845), controlling function (p= 0.012; CI= 1.457-	...were organizational culture (p= 0.004; CI= 1.831-38.404), communication (p= 0.003; CI = 1.776-14,845), controlling function (p= 0.012; CI= 1.457-	The addition of -s (plural) in one of the parallel words of singular noun



No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
	14.790), <i>team relationships</i> ($p=0.016$; $CI= 1.337-9.035$), and <i>training</i> ($p= 0.014$; $CI= 1.365-8.924$)...	14.790), <i>team relationship</i> ($p=0.016$; $CI= 1.337-9.035$), and <i>training</i> ($p= 0.014$; $CI= 1.365-8.924$)...	

According to the data above, the use of *to providing* from the data (#7) 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...”.

Another case of the addition error is related to parallel sentences, as seen from these quotations: “...were organizational culture ($p= 0.004$; $CI= 1.831-38.404$), communication ($p= 0.003$; $CI = 1.776-14,845$), controlling function ($p= 0.012$; $CI= 1.457-14.790$), *team relationships* ($p= 0.016$; $CI= 1.337-9.035$), and training ($p= 0.014$; $CI= 1.365-8.924$)...””. The phrase “team relationships” should be singular, “team relation”, because the previous and following words of the phrase are in the singular. Therefore, the quotations should be changed into “...were organizational culture ($p= 0.004$; $CI= 1.831-38.404$), communication ($p= 0.003$; $CI = 1.776-14,845$), controlling function ($p= 0.012$; $CI= 1.457-14.790$), *team relationship* ($p= 0.016$; $CI= 1.337-9.035$), and training ($p= 0.014$; $CI= 1.365-8.924$)...””.

4.4. Misordering

The structure of morphemes in each language allows the possibility of differences. As an example, sentences in Indonesian are composed with a subject + predicate + object order. On the other hand, in Hindi, it is not the same, as they use a subject + object - predicate order. 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 as an utterance.

Table 5: Examples of grammatical errors in the classification of misordering

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
1	... to determine the influence of TGA and CBT <i>for depression in elderly low self esteem.</i>	...to determine the influence of TGA and CBT <i>on depression of low self-esteem in elderly</i>	Missordering in word order (noun and adjective position)
2	The results showed significant decrease <i>of elderly depression low self-esteem ...</i>	The results showed significant decrease <i>in depression of low self-esteem in elderly</i>	Missordering in word order (position of noun and adjective)

In accordance with two data above, there are suggestions for the better order. Before correcting the order, the common preposition that follows the noun “influence” is on. Then, self-esteem should be written hyphenated (-). The good order might be *to determine the influence of TGA and CBT on depression of low self-esteem in elderly*. The position of elderly is at the end to show that its function as a noun.

What had happened for no.1 is the same. 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 use other diction than elderly, like older adults.

4.5. Common Reasons of The Errors

Guided by Brook's opinion (Ellis, 1993), the researchers show four reason of errors made by foreign language learners, as follow:

1. The foreign language learners do not well understand the structural pattern, so they make a random response;
2. The correct model has been insufficiently practical;
3. The mother tongue may induce distortion;
4. the foreign learners may follow the general rule, which is not applicable in a particular instance.

However, in this study, the researchers focused on only two common reasons for errors referring to numbers 3 and 4.

4.5.1. The first language may induce distortion

Table 6: Examples of the use of “to be”

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
1	<i>Both of them <u>is leading</u> causes of kidney disease</i>	<i>Both of them <u>are leading</u> causes of kidney disease</i>	Improper to be
2	<i><u>so it necessary</u> to actions to prevent HIV transmissions.</i>	<i><u>so it is necessary</u> to actions to prevent the HIV transmissions</i>	Missing to be

As shown above, there are two errors in the use of to be. Indonesian language does not have to be (is, am, are) that follows particular subjects. Errors might come up for second language learners like the Indonesian language. Data 1 showed the wrong use of to be. This should be written “are leading”, not “is leading”. Its subject is plural. Moreover, in the clause “it necessary”, the predicate “is” was omitted. The better reconstruction is “it is necessary”. Although missing to be is like something more frequently found in foreign language learners, this should be fixed for better grammar.



Table 7: Examples of the use of preposition

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
1	<i>... done by participants <u>toward</u> children under five years old.</i>	<i>... done by participants <u>for</u> children under five years old.</i>	Improper preposition
2	<i>and 59% respondents have compliance with medium category.</i>	<i>and 59% of respondents have compliance with medium category.</i>	Missing Preposition

Data 1 showed the wrong use of prepositions in the translated abstract. The better preposition to use is *for children*. Toward most often means “in the direction of something”. Then, in data 2, there was a missing preposition in the noun phrase “59% respondents”. We are better to write 59% of respondents.

Table 8 Example of the use of word order

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
1	<i>Research shows that <u>in the city of Depok, West Java</u>, there is 71% of 229 high school adolescents with depression</i>	<i>Research shows that <u>in Depok City, West Java</u>, there is 71% of 229 high school adolescents with depression</i>	Uncommon word order

The city of Depok refers only to the central financial district, within the old city walls and not the wider urban area. If the research data is spreading in all parts of Depok City, Depok City is better to write about. The word choice becomes more common to use.

4.5.2. The learners may follow the general rule, which is not applicable in a particular instance.

Table 9: Examples of the use of suffix -s

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
1	<i>for the treatment of hypertension in <u>adult</u>.</i>	<i>for the treatment of hypertension in <u>adults</u></i>	Missing s as plural
2	<i>This study can be used as information and <u>evaluation's</u> result...</i>	<i>This study can be used as information and <u>evaluation</u> result...</i>	The adding of “s” as possessive

Again, Indonesian language does not have suffix s to implicate plural and possessive. This error might appear because of the difference between English and Indonesian language. Like in data 1, “adult” should be written as adults and in data 2, we don’t need to add “s” in

the noun phrase “evaluation result”. Evaluation does not belong to the result. It stands alone to clarify what kind of result happened.

Table 10: Example of the use of Gerund

No	Data	Reconstruction	Remarks
1	<i>These results can be the basis for schools to improve the behavior of the students <u>keep</u> personal safety.</i>	<i>These results can be the basis for schools to improve the behavior of the students <u>in keeping</u> personal safety.</i>	Should use gerund.

In accordance with the data above, due to the absence of gerund in Indonesian language, sometimes we obey its use. The clause “to improve the behavior of the students keep personal safety” would be better if constructed “to improve the behavior of the students in keeping personal safety”. The reconstruction sounds more natural and common to use.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the results, it is concluded that grammatical errors in English-translated abstracts, analyzed 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. In addition, this research can still be further developed by looking at the lexical errors made in other research abstracts due to its specialized and peculiar vocabularies in the field of English Literature.

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