

## Error Analysis on Student's Final Project Paper Abstract

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### Received:

January 19, 2024

### Revised:

January 22, 2024

### Accepted:

January 23, 2024

### Published:

February 5, 2024

### ABSTRACT

An abstract is a brief and all-encompassing synopsis of scientific literature. Abstracts facilitate readers' comprehension of article contents concisely and expeditiously. Hence, it is imperative to craft the abstract in a captivating manner to pique the reader's curiosity and encourage them to peruse the complete content. An effective abstract should be precise, objective, logically organised, easily understandable, and concise. Nevertheless, several individuals, namely those studying Nautical Sciences, have encountered difficulty when it comes to writing in English. The task becomes further intricate since it involves meeting all the requirements, such as structuring and presenting coherent concepts to ensure the reader's understanding of the text. The objective of this study is to identify the flaws present in the final project abstract of the Nautical Sciences Student at Akademi Maritim Nusantara Cilacap. This study employs a qualitative methodology, utilising a descriptive analysis technique. A total of ten samples were deliberately gathered for this investigation in the year 2022. The research findings indicate that there are two major concerns regarding faults in composing the abstract, specifically those pertaining to clarity and grammatical accuracy. Clarity errors encompass issues related to brevity (21) and the utilisation of passive voice (15). In addition, the data contained six grammatical problems, specifically verb errors (21), punctuation errors (10), preposition errors (7), spelling errors (5), conjunction errors (5), and article errors (4).

**Keywords:** *abstract; clarity; error analysis; grammatical errors; writing*

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## INTRODUCTION

Writing serves as evidence of an individual's comprehension of a scientific subject. Producing scientific articles is an obligatory task for Akademi Maritim Nusantara Cilacap (AMN) students to make a scientific contribution in their last semester. One linguistic skill that is typically quite simple yet frequently reveals mistakes is writing proficiency. According to Setyowati and Sukmawan (2017), Indonesian students expressed anxiety and lack of enjoyment when it came to writing assignments. When composing a piece, students must articulate their thoughts using well-structured language. By sequentially organizing individual words, they gradually form coherent sentences and paragraphs.

According to Haryudin and Argawati (2018), writing is one of the four fundamental talents in English. Writing is a method of conveying information,

expressing opinions, or communicating ideas via written language. Mastering writing is a crucial ability for children, although it is also a challenging topic in school. The reason is that pupils must consistently generate grammatically accurate English texts daily. Scoot (as in Apsari, 2017) asserts that writing activities are purposeful and aimed at facilitating communication rather than serving as mere exercises. Consequently, teachers must acknowledge the significance of incorporating writing exercises within English instruction.

Furthermore, writing is essential for individuals and groups and is constantly utilized daily. Wardani et al. (2019) state that writing abilities are productive language skills that allow indirect and non-face-to-face communication. The formal education system recognizes the significance of possessing writing proficiency and skill and includes instruction in writing. As mentioned earlier, the description signifies that writing is important in our lives.

Without a doubt, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pupils necessitate support, such as a dictionary or translator, when engaging in language production. These tools assist individuals in constructing sentences by choosing the appropriate language. It encourages students to use an online translation service, such as Google Translate, which can be accessed online. Google Translate plays a vital role in learning English, enabling students to verify the meaning of specific terms promptly. Moreover, they can improve and effectively develop vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (Krisnawati, 2017). Most students evaluated the translation results as they consistently improved their grammar and skills. Similarly, Hilma (2011) agreed that Google Translate has limitations in language understanding. Furthermore, Maulidiyah (2018) expressed apprehensions regarding the influence of Google Translate on language acquisition. Her investigation unveiled that notwithstanding the possible disadvantages of using Google Translate, most students persisted in depending on this translation service.

Although the continuous advancement of translation systems like Google Translate could create the impression of simplicity, a writer needs to deliver precise information that is easily understandable to the reader. Novice writers sometimes try to articulate their thoughts in their primary language (L1) and then endeavor to transfer them into their secondary language (L2). At times, it implies that the native language (L1) obstructs the learning of English. Nevertheless, their mother tongue influences the student's English writing process. Writing assignments primarily hinder understanding the target language's grammatical structures. Therefore, controlling and directing the pupils' tendency towards accurate and concise writing is crucial. It is common to face more English writing difficulties, as composition is an unfamiliar language. Therefore, when writing papers and articles, students make various forms of errors unintentionally and because of the absence of clear English skills (Vidhiasi & Haryani, 2021). Rahmatunisa (2014) identified two main obstacles students face when writing argumentative essays: word arrangement and grammatical structure.

Error analysis (EA) is the primary approach used to examine the process of acquiring a second language. It emphasizes the learners' creative capacity to develop

language rather than relying on the ideal language structure of first-language (L1) and second-language native speakers. The understanding and importance of mistakes transformed with the release of an article by Corder (1981) entitled “The Significance of Learners’ Errors.” In contrast to the prevailing perspectives of instructors during that period, Corder believed that mistakes should not only be seen as something to be eliminated but also as a significant factor that has profoundly altered teachers’ conventional perception of errors.

According to Richards et al. (1985), as in Hafisah (2022), error analysis refers to examining mistakes committed by individuals learning a second or foreign language. Error analysis can be conducted to assess an individual’s language proficiency, understand their language learning process, and provide insights into typical challenges in language acquisition. This information can be used to enhance teaching methods and develop instructional materials. Hence, it may be inferred that error analysis is a process aimed at identifying, categorizing, and interpreting the mistakes produced by an individual in their work.

Analyzing the errors identified in students’ writing can be a suitable method for addressing their writing proficiency, regardless of whether they are native or non-native speakers. Research studies of this kind are highly significant in the field of education, specifically in the English program, as they empower teachers to improve students’ writing abilities through interventions that are supported by evidence. Moreover, this would benefit students as it will serve as the basis for enhancing their writing skills. Furthermore, the findings of this study would also be beneficial for future researchers who want to examine the same topic in relevant contexts. This study concerns students’ works and thoughts during the learning experience. The research question that guided this study is what kind of error types in the theses abstract of the students of the Nautical Sciences program.

## **METHOD**

This study focused on the abstract of a specific vocational college, Akademi Maritim Nusantara Cilacap, specifically its Nautical Sciences program. This work employed a mixed-method approach to collect qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell, 2014; Fitriani et al., 2021). A collection of ten students’ English writings (abstracts) was gathered to determine the grammatical faults that arose in their writing.

The grammatical faults in the students’ writing were examined by examining the documents. Initially, the documents were carefully examined and scrutinized to identify the recurring mistakes included in their linguistic expressions. The grammatical errors were categorized and displayed as a percentage. Ultimately, the faults that arose in the pupils’ writing tasks were deliberated upon.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the data gathered, two major issues are of concern in analyzing the abstracts of the ten students' final assignments. The two big issues in question are related to the problem of a sentence's clarity and grammar. The analysis results found 36 clarity problems and 52 grammar problems from the ten abstract samples used in this research. Of the 36 problems related to clarity, the author found that there were 15 uses of passive sentences in the abstract and 21 sentences that had problems related to conciseness. Verb form errors mostly dominate the problems related to grammar. The number of errors found for each type of error from the ten data analyzed can be seen in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Types of Clarity Errors**

No	Types of Grammatical Errors	$\Sigma$	%
1	Conciseness	21	58.3
2	Passive Voice	15	41.7
	TOTAL	36	100

Further description of the clarity errors produced in the abstract writing of the students based on the table mentioned above, explained as follows:

### 1. Passive Voice

The passive voice does not constitute a grammatical error. It is a matter of personal preference in terms of style. Nevertheless, the active voice is favored by the majority of readers. A clause written in the active voice involves the subject of the clause doing an action (e.g., I observed Jack). A passive voice clause involves the subject of the phrase being acted upon (e.g., Jack was observed). The active voice offers greater clarity, conciseness, responsibility, and assurance than the passive voice. This sentence serves as an illustration of the error description.

#### Excerpt #1

Passive Voice : *Maintenance of ship safety equipment must be carried out as a condition for ships ...*

Alternative : *[Someone] must carry out the maintenance of ship safety ...*

### 2. Conciseness

Although a statement may possess grammatical accuracy, it can nonetheless lack clarity or be challenging to comprehend. Clumsy wording or superfluous phrases compel your reader to exert more effort in comprehending your intended meaning. Excessively lengthy or excessively complex sentences can result in the same issue. Eliminating superfluous words, refining clumsy expressions, and ensuring sentence brevity are effective methods to enhance the clarity of your writing. This sentence serves as an illustration of the error description.

**Excerpt #2**

Unclear : *The health of the crew, all must be properly prepared and ascertained the existence and circumstances so that the cruise will be safe and secure.*

Clear : *The crew's health must be properly prepared, and the existence and circumstances must be ascertained to ensure the cruise is safe and secure.*

**Table 2. Types of Grammatical Errors**

No	Types of Grammatical Errors	$\Sigma$	%
1	Verb	21	40.4
2	Punctuation	10	19.2
3	Preposition	7	13.5
4	Spelling	5	9.6
5	Conjunction	5	9.6
6	Articles	4	7.7
<b>TOTAL</b>		52	100

Further description of the errors produced in the abstract writing of the students based on the table mentioned above, explained as follows:

**1. Verb**

The analysis results show that 21 errors were found related to the use of verbs and to be. The following sentences are examples of the error description.

**Excerpt #3**

Incorrect : *Other causes of bale blast wear: Breaking of propeller shaft seal ...*

Correct : *Other causes of bale blast wear **are** breaking of the propeller shaft seal ...*

**Excerpt #3** exhibits an improper utilization of colon punctuation (:). As the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) states, the colon punctuation mark (:) indicates the end of a full statement, which is then immediately followed by additional information or explanations. Upon examining the entirety of the sentence data, it becomes evident that the abstract writer fails to furnish the desired details outlined in the explanation in the KBBI. Hence, the suitable amendment is substituting the colon punctuation with the verb "are".

**Excerpt #4**

Incorrect : *Ship cleaning methods carried out in the framework of ship maintenance*

Correct : *Ship cleaning methods **are** carried out **within** the framework of ship maintenance.*

Unlike the results in **Excerpt #3**, it was discovered that the sentences in **Excerpt #4** were written in the passive voice. The lack of actors present in the statement evidences this. However, the abstract writer neglected to include the verb "are" as the conventional form of a passive statement, particularly in the simple present tense.

### Excerpt #5

Incorrect : *This research is to find whether ...*

Correct : *This research **aims** to find whether ...*

The findings in **Excerpt #5** closely resemble those in **Excerpt #3**. In **Excerpt #5**, the abstract writer erred in verb selection, distinguishing it from other instances. The verb “aims” is more suitable in this context as it specifically conveys the purpose or objective of writing the scientific article, whereas “is” provides a broader description of the document itself.

## 2. Punctuation

A significant number of punctuation problems were discovered in the abstract writing data. A total of 52 mistakes were identified, with 10 errors being detected. Out of the total of 10 faults, the author saw that the abstract writer made mistakes in utilizing punctuation marks, including periods, commas, and colons (see **Excerpt #3**). These sentences serve as an illustration of the error description.

### Excerpt #6

Incorrect : *Ship and shipping safety indicators are two sides that are not separated, the ship must have safety equipment ...*

Correct : *Ship and shipping safety indicators are two sides that are not separated. The ship must have safety equipment ...*

**Excerpt #6** pertains to the identification of faults in the utilization of commas. Upon examining the correction section, it becomes evident that the sentences in **Excerpt #6** are, in fact, two distinct sentences addressing separate themes. The semicolon punctuation mark in the context of the KBBI has multiple uses, one of which is to separate the main and subordinate sentences. However, due to the fact that the findings in **Excerpt #6** consist of two phrases addressing different themes, it is more suitable to divide them with a period of punctuation.

### Excerpt #7

Incorrect : *This type of research is a qualitative descriptive study which is a description of a company's secondary sources which is a study that does not make calculations.*

Correct : *This type of research is a qualitative descriptive study, which is a description of a company's secondary sources, which is a study that does not make calculations.*

Comma punctuation errors were identified in **Excerpt #7** as well. The abstract writer intends to present specific information using phrases. The usage of the word “which” in the phrase indicates this. However, the statement in **Excerpt #7** will be

more legible if a comma is inserted. This will offer readers insights to facilitate their comprehension of the forthcoming explanations.

### 3. Preposition

Prepositions are grammatical elements that convey the relationship between a noun or noun phrase and the rest of the sentence. Certain prepositions, such as “in,” “on,” “after,” or “since,” convey chronological or spatial connections. Alternatively, the connection is less concrete in certain instances, and the most suitable preposition to employ may vary based on the surrounding terms. These prepositions are referred to as “dependent prepositions,” and they lack a discernible pattern.

The data contained numerous prepositional mistakes. Despite comprising only 7 out of the total 52 faults identified, preposition errors can significantly alter the meaning of a phrase. These sentences serve as an illustration of the error description.

#### Excerpt #8

Incorrect : ... *human resource fisherman development in the South Coast of Cilacap ...*

Correct : ... *human resource fisherman development on the South Coast of Cilacap ...*

**Excerpt #8** has an erroneous use of prepositions, specifically the use of “in”. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, when referring to specific places, using the preposition “on” is more suitable than other prepositions.

#### Excerpt #9

Incorrect : *Shipping safety equipment is the most important part for the ship to support ship activities during the voyage.*

Correct : *Shipping safety equipment is the most important part of supporting ship activities during the voyage.*

**Excerpt #9** contains two prepositions, “for” and “to”, which have essentially the same meaning when translated into Indonesian. Nevertheless, the sentence in **Excerpt #9** conveys a distinct interpretation. The abstract’s author aims to elucidate the significance of ship safety equipment in facilitating ship navigation.

In a study conducted by Sari (2019), it was discovered that preposition errors placed second among the categories of errors, accounting for 15 errors (9%) of the total data. These errors ultimately contribute to the most common type of error: unfinished sentences. Misapplication of prepositions constitutes a grammatical mistake. The study's findings indicate that preposition errors result in sentence incompleteness, primarily due to limited vocabulary or inadequate comprehension of sentence structures, particularly those involving tense and prepositions.

### 4. Spelling

Abstract data may have spelling issues, such as lowercase abbreviations and missing word letters. **Excerpts #10** and **#11** provide evidence of this.

### Excerpt #10

Incorrect : ... *ocean freight, doc fee + 10% vat, telex resales...*

Correct : ... *ocean freight, doc fee + 10% VAT, telex resales ...*

**Excerpt #10** suggests that the abstract author intends to discuss value-added tax, commonly abbreviated as VAT. When writing in capital letters, it is important to remember that VAT is an acronym.

### Excerpt #11

Incorrect : ...*difference between seling and buying is seen...*

Correct : ... *difference between selling and buying is seen ...*

A single missing letter was discovered in **Excerpt #11**. The abstract author aims to elucidate the distinction between selling and buying. Nevertheless, the abstract writer erred by using the verb “seling” instead of “selling”.

## 5. Conjunction

Conjunctions link words to words, phrases to clauses, sentences to sentences, or paragraphs to paragraphs (see Chaer, 2008; Irawati, 2020). **Excerpt #12** reveals issues pertaining to conjunctions identified in the data.

### Excerpt #12

Incorrect : *The purpose and research is to explain the sandblasting method on MV vessels.*

Correct : *The purpose of the research is to explain the sandblasting method on MV vessels.*

The abstract writer shows the use of the conjunction “and” in Excerpt #12. Irawati (2020) states that the coordinating conjunction includes the conjunction “and”. This implies that the conjunction links two elements of equivalent status.

In **Excerpt #12**, the terms “the purpose” and “research” are distinct elements. When discussing a scientific paper, it is expected that the author had a certain objective in mind when writing it. Based on this rationale, the appropriate remedial measure is substituting the conjunction “and” with the preposition “of” to indicate possession.

## 6. Articles

An article is a grammatical element, such as “a/an” or “the” that precedes a noun to specify its referent. It is advisable to utilize an article when referring to a singular countable noun such as a person, house, apple, or book. Articles are occasionally necessary, albeit not universally, before plural nouns, proper nouns, or uncountable nouns.

It was determined that there were a total of 4 errors specifically pertaining to the use of articles out of the 52 errors identified. Out of the four faults, the author discovered that the abstract writer made an inaccuracy by utilizing the article “the” as



a reference marker for a particular object. **Excerpts #13** and **#14** provide evidence of this.

### **Excerpt #13**

Incorrect : *Other causes of bale blast wear: Breaking of propeller shaft seal ...*

Correct : *Other causes of bale blast wear are breaking of the propeller shaft seal ...*

### **Excerpt #14**

Incorrect : *... either to make it coarser or make a surface smoother ...*

Correct : *... either to make it coarser or make the surface smoother ...*

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the investigation findings, it can be inferred that grammatical errors are more prevalent than clarity-related issues. Previously, it was said that clarity is not a mistake. However, the clarity of a written work also plays a crucial role in determining its readability. Opting for a passive voice is simply a matter of selecting a particular writing style. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that a written piece should offer unambiguous and precise information.

Verbal issues persist as a challenge for students enrolled in non-English language study programs. Furthermore, due to the fact that English is still regarded as a foreign language in Indonesia, students have considerable challenges when it comes to incorporating English into their writing (Vidhiasi & Haryani, 2021). As Gildore et al. (2023) state, making mistakes in writing is a typical occurrence, particularly among students whose first language is not English, as indicated by the literature. The study found that L1 transfer explains most of the errors students make. Non-native speakers adhere to the conventions of their native language, causing them to adopt the same structure and conventions when learning a second language (L2).

According to the results, the teacher is advised to employ an efficient teaching method for verb tenses. Both the teacher and students collaborate to detect flaws and encourage pupils to comprehend their shared mistakes, especially in the context of writing. Thus, errors might be steadily diminished in the realm of scholarly writing.

This study focused exclusively on the English abstracts of the student's final project reports. To enhance the students' learning, it is recommended that their writing project be presented multiple times, accompanied by feedback. The assigned writing practices provided by the programs can be analyzed, contrasted, and evaluated to determine whether they were directly translated from the user's first language (L1) without any influence from second language (L2) rules.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to extend his profound appreciation to the Akademi Maritim Nusantara Cilacap for their invaluable assistance in enabling the completion of this article.

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