

OMISSION IN WRITING UNDERGRADUATE THESIS PROPOSALS

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<i>Omission Grammatical Error Undergraduate Thesis Proposal</i>	This writing is a part of research related to grammatical errors committed by the last semester students of the English Study Program of Universitas Nusa Cendana in writing their undergraduate thesis proposal. Using Surface Strategy Taxonomy, the students' grammatical errors are analyzed. Since most errors found in students' writing fall into Omission errors, this writing will be focused on elaborating the errors only. The result shows that in writing the undergraduate thesis proposals, the students tend to eliminate important elements in sentences such as to be (am/is/are), article (a, an, the), 's as a plural marker, the suffix -s as a possessive marker), the suffix -s/es on the verb of the third singular person of present tense, preposition, the suffix -ing, past marker (the suffix -ed), subject of the sentence and to in to-infinitives.
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INTRODUCTION

Hamp - Lyons in Nunan (1991: 91) explains that writing is commonly a difficult activity for most people, both in their mother tongue and in a foreign language since it does not only need special preparation but also language skills. In the English Study Program of Universitas Nusa Cendana, the students are being prepared to be able to master Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing skills. For the writing skills, there 4 subjects to be learned based on the level, those subjects are Writing I, II, III, and Academic Writing. Each subject has its own teaching aims and level of difficulty. However, being able to pass all the Writing-based subjects above does not guarantee that a student will automatically become a good writer.

To become a Sarjana Pendidikan, an English Study Program student is required to write a thesis, but in order to write a thesis, the student must first write his or her thesis proposal. Writing an undergraduate thesis proposal needs a lot of effort and takes time. At this moment, all the knowledge derived from the Writing Subjects that the student learned before will help him/her throughout the process. Based on the writer's prior observation as a thesis supervisor in the English Study Program of Universitas Nusa Cendana, one of the

main problems in writing a thesis is grammar. Most of the supervisor also complains about the same problems.

Based on the fact above, the writer thinks it is an urge to find out the typical errors that the students committed when writing their undergraduate thesis proposal, the writer believes that how the sentence is produced in the piece of writing reflects how well a language learner understood how foreign-language works, the writer also believes that this kind of research is badly needed to understand the students' competence in learning English, to map their problems especially from the grammatical point of view and later be able to provide a better teaching method and material. The sooner we find and fix the problems that might be lead to the error, the better.

Dealing with the type of errors, Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982: 150-163), classifies errors into four categories based on the surface strategy taxonomy. They are omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. Huan, et al (2022) in their previous research, were able to identify those four categories of errors in students's undergraduate thesis proposal. The finding shows that 54% of grammatical errors was occurred in chapter two (Review of Related Literature), 29% of errors was found in Chapter one (the background of the study), and only 17% of errors was occurred in chapter three (research method). they concluded that from the four categories of errors, omission contributes the most grammatical problems in students writing. Based on this, the writer will limit the study by elaborating only the omission errors committed by the students in writing their undergraduate thesis proposal. Omission can also be called a deletion. It is the missing of one or more items that must exist in a sentence or utterance. It happens if the lexical item which should be present is omitted or deleted (Hikmah,2020).

METHOD

This research is a descriptive study. It is aimed to investigate the grammatical errors in students' undergraduate thesis proposals. The error will be analyzed by using the Surface Strategy Taxonomy approach proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982). This approach mentions 4 types of grammatical errors such as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering but in this research, the writer will only focus on the aspect of omission. The study is held on the English Study Program of Universitas Nusa Cendana. The data were 25 undergraduate thesis proposals written by 25 students of the English Study Program who are

going to do the seminar proposal. The proposal must contain three (3) chapters: Introduction, Review of Related Literature, and Research Method.

After collecting the students' proposals, the writer identified and checked the errors made by the students, after that the writer classified all the errors, focused on the omission errors, and categorized them. In this study, the researcher is the main instrument who carried out the study directly. In analyzing the data, the writer used three techniques, those are (1) identifying by underlining the errors, (2) classifying the omission errors, and (3) coding the data found, and analyzing it using the theories from Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982)

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Dulay, Burt, et al (1981:154) says that "Omission is a type of errors which are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance". Based on that statement, an error that is categorized as "omission" is the omission of some elements in a well-structured sentence. As mentioned before, Huan, et al (2021) has discovered an interesting phenomenon where they found that the most grammatical errors occurring in students writing is related to omission. Therefore, in this research, the discussion will be focussing in typical cases errors found related to this category, they are:

1. The Omission of To Be (*am/is/are*)

Omitting To Be (am, is are) in a sentence is a piece of evidence that these students have some issues related to grammar rules especially Passive Voice. There are many sentences in the students' proposals written in a passive form. It can not be argued that most of our writing in English is affected by Indonesian structure that usually is in passive form. Students in this case also got affected. But the problem arose when they have to use a massive form of passive voice but do not have proper knowledge on how to construct ones.

This type of error can be found in most of the students' proposal writings. For example:

Data 01 "The target of this study to find out how story telling can improve students' speaking skill "(S.02)

Data 02 In a debate, opposing arguments **put** forward to...(s.21)

Data 03 Nowadays, there are a lot of borrowing words from English used and spoken in many mass media in Indonesia and **it also written** by journalist as sources to share in newspaper. (s.03)

Data 02 shows that the student tried to construct a passive voice but ended up using to-infinitive (put). In order to make the correct sentence, a “to be” is needed depending on the subject. So the correct form will be: ***In a debate, opposing arguments are put forward to....*** Data 03 also has the same problem, the sentence “... ***it also written by journalist as sources to share in newspaper***” is incorrect unless a *to be* is added after the subject “it” to link the subject *it* and the verb *written*. While Data 01 is not about the error in constructing a passive form, the sentence “***The target of this study to find out how story telling can improve students’ speaking skill***” shows how the student simply removes a “to be” to link between the subject and the to-infinitive. *To-infinitive* can function as a noun and can be placed in the middle of a sentence as a direct object, and as a direct object, the to be (am, is, are) is needed to link the subject with the to-infinitive. So the correct sentence for this data is: “***The target of this study is to find out how storytelling can improve students’ speaking skills***”

2. The Omission of Article (a, an, the)

Article (a, an, the) is one of the basic theories that a student especially an English Study Program has to master. But in this research, most of the students are still struggling to be able to use it appropriately. The problems can be seen in the following sentences:

Data 04 “**Song writer** usually uses figurative language to describe many things in life” (S.08)

Data 05 “Lengthen **wait time** between question and answer”.(S.25)

Data 06 “Figurative language is **language** that uses figures of speech”(S.08) “An object or reference is a social context which becomes **reference** from a sign or thing”(S.5)

Data 07 “...in which elements from the two languages are incorporated into **structurally defineble pattern**”(s.03)

- Data 08** “What are **types of English – Indonesian code mixing** used by Marion Jola in her Instagram?” (S.03)
- Data 09** The debating championship in this research is a debate held by the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, **University of Nusa Cendana** at 25 to 27 July 2020 (s.21)
- Data 10** English is **one of important languages** in this world. (s.11)
- Data 11** Timor express is **one of popular daily newspapers** in East Nusa Tenggara (s.11)
- Data 12** As we know that Marion Jola is **one of East Nusa Tenggara Province community***(S.03)

Articles in English are a, an, and the. They serve as an adjective. The is called ‘definite article’ and is used to refer to particular nouns, while a/an is called indefinite article and is used to modify non-specific or non-particular nouns.

a) Omission of article “a/an”

Data 01, 02, and 03 are the representatives' evidence on how the students are struggling with the use of the article. Data 01 for From the sentence “***Song writer usually uses figurative language to describe many things in life***” (S.08), we can clearly see that ‘song writer’ is the subject of the sentence, it is a noun phrase. A noun phrase is a group of two or more words headed by a noun that includes modifiers such as an article. In this case, article *a* can be used as *Song writer* here refers to a non-particular subject and it is a singular noun. So, the correct sentence should be “**A Song writer usually uses figurative language to describe many things in life**” .

b) Omission of the article “the”

Data 06 is about the use of the article ‘the’ in front of an institution’s name. There are two different ways to say the name of a university: X University or The University of X. Both of them are correct, but has slightly different in use. X University can be applied if X is the name of the university but The University of X can be used if X is the name of the place the university resides. In this case, Nusa Cendana is the name of the university, so **Nusa Cendana University** is the correct form, The sentence should be: ***The debating championship in this research is a debate held by the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Nusa Cendana University.***

Data 05, 07, 08, 09 have the same problems. The omission happened when they constructed sentences that contain the phrase ‘kind of’ or ‘one of’. Take an example of data 07: “English is **one of important languages** in this world”. (s.11). to construct a sentence that contains this phrase, students need to remember that the phrase ‘one of’ is a singular term that is generally used to talk about noun or pronoun, and the noun or the pronoun used after the phrase ‘one of’ is always in specific plural form. The specific plural noun here refers to the use of the article ‘the’ before the plural noun, and the sentence pattern will be like one of + *the* important **languages**. So, the correct sentence should be: “*English is one of the important languages in this world*”.

Omitting articles contributes a lot to the grammatical errors in students’ writing, the researcher believes that students were failed to identify the noun in their own sentences because they neglected the singular and plural form of a noun. The chance of making this error is getting bigger when they tried to construct complex sentences, they started ignoring the rule of using articles and used Indonesian structure to build an English structured sentence since they do not have adequate knowledge related to English Grammar. One of the possibilities happened related to this phenomenon is because students tend to underestimate the rules of using an article in a sentence.

3. The Omission of the suffix –s/es (as a plural marker)

Data 13 “Code-mixing is found when a speaker mixes **two language** or more **to** achieve a particular purpose”.(S.03)

Data 14 “East Malaka and West Sumatra **tribe** used a matrilinear system. (s.05)

Data 15 The old traditional figures are **the uncle** of the girls who are the role of the tradition. (s.05)

Data 16 **The user** of doangang recite doangang in Makassar language because they want to

Data 17 “Citra Bangsa Senior High School is **one of the best school** in kupang” (s.26)

The omission of the suffix –s/es as the plural marker is the next problem found in the students’ writing. For example, data 10: “*Code-mixing is found when a speaker mixes **two language or more** to achieve a particular purpose*”(S.03). the sentence

contains an incorrect noun phrase ‘two language (or more)’. Grammatically speaking, a noun takes a final –s/-es in plural form, in this case, the plural form is indicated by ‘two’ so the correct phrase should be: *two languages* and it will make the correct version of the sentence: **“Code-mixing is found when a speaker mixes two languages or more to achieve a particular purpose’**

While for data 14: “Citra Bangsa Senior High School is **one of the best school** in kupang” (s.26), the previous discussion can be applied in this case, the phrase “one of’ must be followed by a specific plural noun, so the phrase **one of** must be followed by **the best schools**. The correct version of the above sentence will be: ***Citra Bangsa Senior High School is one of the best schools in Kupang.***

4. The Omission of ‘s (as a possessive marker)

One of the challenges for the students is to form a sentence that contains a possessive form, some of the students are still bound to the structure of Indonesian in which there is no morpheme like –‘s in English as a possessive marker. Errors that the students made can be seen below:

Data 17 “Hornby (1995: 235) states that comprehension is the power of understanding an exercised aimed at improving or testing **ones understanding of a language** in written or spoken” (s.02)

Data 18 “The other advantages of using the cartoon movie in the visual images stimulus **students perceptions** directly, while written word can do indirectly”.(s.25)

One of the easiest ways to create a possessive form in English is to add an apostrophe s (‘s) after the noun to show the relationship of belonging between one thing and another. Take data 16 as the example: *“The other advantages of using the cartoon movie in the visual images stimulus **students perceptions** directly, while written word can do indirectly”.(s.25)*. The students failed to create the possessive form “students perception”, it is supposed to be *students’ perception* or the perception that belongs to the students by simply adding the –‘s. the correct sentence will be: ***“The other advantages of using the cartoon movie in the visual images stimulus students’ perceptions directly, while written word can do indirectly”***

5. The Omission of the suffix –s/es on the verb of the third singular person of present tense.

In the simple present tense, if the subject of the sentence is the third singular person (she, he, it) then the suffix –s or –es need to be attached to the verb.

Data 19 “Chapter 2 **consist** of the backgroud of the study” (S.05)

Data 20 “Animation video is a modern entertainment media, it **consist** of moving picture, texts and graphics which integrated with sound and voice” (S.25)

Data 21 “The writer **acknowledge** that it is impossible to include all factors related to this research in given time” (S.21)

Data 22 For example: the word “*Akses*” in Indonesian, **come** from English (s.11)

Ignoring subject-verb agreement rules is a typical problem committed by EFL students. Data 17 is a simple sentence, which the subject dan the verb can be identified easily. **Chapter 2** is the subject of the sentence, it is a singular noun so the verb **consist** has to be attached with the suffix –s/es. The correct sentence will be: **Chapter 2 consists of the background of the study.**

6. Omission of Preposition

The examples of how students’ mistakenly omitted a preposition can be seen in data 21 to 23 below.

Data 23 “Marion Jola was born in Kupang, **June 12th 2000**;(s.03)

Data 24 The researcher conduct research at SMPN 1 LEMBOR SELATAN, **which located Bonda**, Lendong village”. (s.018)

Data 25 “The switching to Pilipino from English is done because of **the lack knowledge** of the writer”. (s.03)

In Data 21, the students omitted the preposition in, while ‘in’ must be used to show a general, longer period of time such as months, years, decades od centuries. So the correct sentence should be: “*Marion Jola was born in Kupang, on June 12th 2000*”.

Data 22 needs a preposition of place. Bonda is a name of a place, for a general place we need to use ‘in’ before the name of the place. The correct sentence should be: *The*

researcher conduct research at SMPN 1 LEMBOR SELATAN, which located in Bonda, Lendong village”.

Data 23 deals with the use of **lack/lack of** in a sentence. Lack can be used as a verb and also as a noun. Data 27 shows that the student tried to construct a sentence by using the word ‘lack’ without having prior knowledge of this. Lack can serve as a noun or a verb. When it serves as a noun, phrase *the lack* needs to be added preposition *of* to become *the lack of*. So the correct sentence for data 2 is *“The switching to Pilipino from English is done because of the lack of knowledge of the writer”*.

7. The omission of the suffix –ing

Some examples of omission suffix –ing can be seen below:

Data 26 “...because the class is noisy when the **teacher’s explain** the material”. (s.25)

Data 27 From the notes and all the data which have been recorded or pictured, the researcher will put those on a list **before validate them** (s.11)

Data 26 shows that the student would like to describe two activities in the class by combining present tense and present progressive tense. They are used to talk about habitual class activities. The problem happens when the student failed to use the correct form of –ing to express the second activity that has to be in the progressive form (verb+-ing), so the correct sentence should be: *“...because the class is noisy when the teacher’s explaining the material”*.

Data 25 is one of the errors that happened in a sentence because the student failed to use the correct progressive form after a preposition ‘before’. The rule is when we use a preposition then the following verb after that must be attached to the –ing form. So the correct sentence for the data 25 should be: *“From the notes and all the data which have been recorded or pictured, the researcher will put those on a list before validating them”*

8. Omission of past marker (suffix –ed)

Based on the data below, the omission of past marker (-ed) happened when the students tried to construct a passive voice.

Data 28 “A teacher should only correct when there is problem but should not correct every time a student makes a mistake because **will be affect** the flow of conversation”, (s.25)

Data 29 Based on the ideas cited above, **the writer is interest** in conducting a study entitled Lexical and Syntactical Features in Procedural Text (s.09)

Data 30 From the source above, **can be conclude** that in each song definitely has different figurative language (S.01)

In order to form the passive, **be** need to be followed by a past participle (be + past participle). So, in data 28, the verb ‘affect’ that is still in the simple form must be changed into affected (past participle) to become: **will be affected**. In data 29 becomes **is interested** and data 30 becomes **can be concluded**.

9. Omission of Subject

Every sentence needs a subject. The subject of a sentence is the person, place, or thing that is performing the action of the sentence. The simple subject usually contains a noun, pronoun and can include modifying words, phrases, or clauses (butte.edu). Reflecting on the explanation above and the data, the researchers found some sentences that did not have a subject. For example:

Data 31 “A teacher should only correct when there is problem but should not correct every time a student makes a mistake because will be effect the flow of conversation, (s.26)

Data 33 “Those can communicate and have a good experience

Data 34 From the source above, **can be conclude** that in each song definitely has different figurative language (S.01)

Data 35 “A teacher should only correct when there is problem but should not correct every time a student makes a mistake because **will be effect** the flow of conversation

The tendency of creating errors based on the data is because the students were struggling with a complex sentence. Data 31 and 35 for example, the students constructed sentences that contains more than one clause and failed to add the subject after the preposition *because*.

While data 33 shows that the subject seems to have a wrong construction, *those* is a demonstrative pronoun and must be used with a plural noun. The last is data 34, the student seems to construct the sentence by directly translating the Indonesian sentence structure into English, and produces a sentence without a subject.

10. Omission to for to infinitives

The problems related to the omission of *to* in an infinitive form can be seen below:

Data 36 “The result of this study may help the students **understand** types of words which are dominantly used in procedural text”(s.03)

Data 37 “This research aims at helping students **understand** sentence structure by learning it through procedure text”. (s.09)

Data 38 “Prefixes is **added the affixes** in the beginning of the word.(s.05)

Data 39 “Suffixes is **added the affixes** in the end of the word. (s.05)

In English, some verbs can be followed immediately by an infinitive and some can be followed by a pronoun and then an infinitive. Data 36 and 37 contain the issues being mentioned above. Data 36 for example The subject is **the result of the study**, the Predicate is **may help** and the object is **the students**, so the verb **understand** after that should be in the form of to-infinitive or **to understand**.

The pattern of the correct sentence will be:

	Verb+	(pro)noun+	To infinitive
<i>The result of the study</i>	<i>may help</i>	<i>the students</i>	<i>to understand</i>

CONCLUSION

The most common omissions found in this research are the omission of *to be* (am/is/are), the omission of the article (a, an, the), the omission of the suffix *-s/es* (as a plural marker), the omission of the suffix *-s* (as a possessive marker), the omission of the suffix *-s/es* on the verb of the third singular person of the present tense, omission of a preposition, the omission of the suffix *-ing*, omission of past marker (suffix *-ed*), omission of subject and omission of *to* in to-infinitives. The fact that omission is the most common error found in

students' proposals indicates that even the last semester students of the English Study Program are still struggling with the basic rules of English grammar.

The tendency to eliminate basic elements in sentences especially some parts of speech (word classes) shows that students do not have a strong foundation related to word classes so when they tried to construct sentences some word classes are eliminated without proper consideration. Basic knowledge of word classes should be strengthened at the beginning of the semester, since a good knowledge of the basic English structure will reduce students' grammatical problems in teaching-learning processes in the future or when students have to deal with thesis writing.

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