



## **GRAMMATICAL ERROR ON STUDENTS' RESEARCH PROPOSAL WRITING**

<sup>1\*,2,3</sup> **Siswoyo, Choirul Yakfi, Indah Sulistiani**

<sup>1,2,3</sup> English Education Study Program, Muhammadiyah University of  
Pringsewu Email Correspondence: siswoyo@umpri.ac.id

### *Abstract*

*This article analyzed the students' grammatical errors in research proposal writing. The results showed that they had addition, omission, misformation and misordering. The highest error is misformation and the lowest is misordering. These errors are because they had not paid more attention to the tenses uses. Besides, they read thesis written in past tense. Another factor is due to carelessness in writing research proposal. They did not read the research proposal carefully. To overcome these errors are: (1) to ask the upper-class students to check the grammar; (2) to read English grammar books; (3) to consult the advisors directly.*

**Keywords:** Grammatical Error, Research Proposal, Surface Strategy Taxonomy

### **INTRODUCTION**

The students of university who have taken and passed a research methodology course are allowed to program a research proposal seminar. These students especially for those who have attained the sixth or seventh semester. They have to write a research proposal in English language. The research proposal is a step before conducting the research. Research proposal is a planning of what activities that are going to be done by the researchers before coming to the research field. Because the proposal talks planning, so the tense that is used is future expression. Not all of the students of university as the researchers have been familiar with the use of tense in writing research proposal. They used simple past tense in relation to what they are going to do when conducting the research. In addition, they also used passive voice forms with inappropriate passive voice English rule.

By having errors in using the tenses in research proposal writing confuse the advisors. The solution of overcoming the grammatical errors in writing research proposal is vital thing. The writers of the research proposal article will have more opportunity to be able to finish their research proposal earlier. The advisors will not check the grammar anymore. They can focus more on the content of the research



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proposal rather than the grammar writing. This way makes the advisors easy to understand the content of the research proposal. In addition, having more grammatical errors in writing the research proposal makes the research proposals hard to understand. Knowing the overcoming of the grammatical errors in writing the research proposals has good impact to the writing of the research proposals before submitting to the advisors. The students who are going to write the research proposals can minimize their grammatical errors. They will know their grammatical errors and learn the unidentified grammatical by the students as the researchers.

Making errors in learning and using a foreign language are unavoidable for language learners. Previous researches related to errors had been conducted by the researchers. The researcher had conducted the research in connection with grammatical error and the results showed that the respondents had errors in writing the disagreement between the subjects and their predicates, disagreement of pronouns and antecedents, fragments, punctuation and spelling (Pescante-Malimas & Samson, 2017). Another researcher also analyzed the writers' abstract and it was found that the Turkish authors had 188 errors in five main categories: grammatical, syntactic, mechanics, lexical, and semantic errors. The leading categories were syntax and grammar while the high rate was mechanics. (Korkmaz et al., 2023). Besides that, the research proposal writers also had errors in forming the affixation. They generalized the use of suffix "s" the final of the verbs. They added "s" at all final verbs. They also used double to be in a sentence (Octaberlina & Muslimin, 2022). The researchers also found that the writer had error in forming the passive voice (Hayuni & Oktavia, 2022; Ratmo, 2017; R. Sari et al., 2022). Other researchers conducted a research about the problems faced by the thesis proposal writing. They found that the writer had problems in their psychological factors, socio-cultural factors, and linguistic factors (Rastri et al., 2023). They also analyzed the errors in forming the parallel construction (A. P. Sari & Oktavia, 2023). Based on the previous researches it can be said that they analyzed grammatical and mechanical errors without investigating their tense form and their solution in reducing errors. (Pescante-Malimas & Samson, 2017), the most errors were in the field of grammar that consists of disagreement between the pronoun and antecedent, wrong usage of tense, and disagreement between the verb subject. In the syntax field, the most problematic areas were: fragments and run-ons.

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Therefore, the current research is to complete the existing previous researches. The objectives of the current research are to explore: (1) types of grammatical error in writing research proposal; (2) factors affecting of making errors; and (3) solution to decrease grammatical errors towards the research proposal drafts.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research used qualitative approach in analyzing the students' research proposal writing grammatical errors. The population of the current research were the students who had qualified to take the research proposal academically. The population of the current research is the students who had passed the research method course and took the S1 thesis. The sample of the current research was taken purposively. The total sample of the current research were 7 (seven). It was due to the allotment of the students who had grammatical errors in their research proposal writing. The data were collected through (1) the documentation, and (2) questionnaires. The documentation was taken from the students' research proposal writing draft. The questionnaires were distributed by google form. This google form was used to make the participants free in answering the questions in the questionnaires. By collecting the data of the students' reason of having errors and the solution of decreasing the grammatical errors in writing the research proposal, the data of the current research are the students' research proposal writing. To analyze the data, the researcher used data reduction, data classification and data display.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Findings**

Based on the research proposal writing draft submitted to the advisor, the students had various errors in writing their research proposal. Based on the surface strategy taxonomy, it can be found that the students experienced grammatical errors in writing their research proposals. These error types can be classified as: addition, omission, misformation, and misordering. The findings of the current research about errors can be seen in the following table 7.

### *Types of Errors*

**Table 7.** Types of errors made by the students in writing their research proposals

Error Types	Total of Errors	Total students
Addition	18	7
Omission	33	4
Misformation	37	8
Misordering	1	1
Total	89	

The table 7 above presents the data of the general grammatical error total based on the surface taxonomy. The students who made addition errors are 7 students with 18 additions. Those who had omission errors are 4 students with 33 omission errors. The students who had misformation errors are 8 students with 37 misformation errors. Misordering errors are made by 1 student with 1 misordering. Based on the table 1 above, it can be stated that the students had more grammatical errors in misformation type. The distribution of students' errors types can be formulated in the following sections.

*Addition*

Addition error is indicated by the appearance of phoneme or morpheme that is not suitable with the appropriate English regulation. The samples of addition error are presented in the table 8 as follows.

**Table 8.** Types of addition errors made by the students in writing their research proposals

Addition Types	Errors	Correct	Addition	Frequency
Plural	Researchers	Researcher	S	8
To be	Was consisted of	Consists of	Was	1
	Make be comfort	Make comfort	Be	1
	It is cover	It covers	Is	1
Inflection	Will using	Will use	Ing	1
Pronoun	Its mean	It means	S	1
Definite article	Based on the some explanations	Based on some explanations	The	1
Auxiliary verb "have"	research that <del>have</del> has treatment	research that has treatment	Have	1

Based on the distribution types of the addition types shown on the table 8 above, it can be seen that the students had various addition errors when they wrote their research proposal. They had addition types in plural, auxiliary verbs (to be), inflection, pronoun, definite article, and auxiliary verb "have". The students had added "s" for the singular form in the word "researchers". They also had addition in using the auxiliary verb to be "was". Besides that, the student had addition error in using the verb after modal

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auxiliary “will”. The student made error addition in pronoun subject “it” by adding “s” at the end of “it”. In addition, they had added some items that should not be added such as definite article “the” before “some” and added auxiliary verb “have”. Most of the addition error types done by the students are in making plural form.

### *Omission*

Omission error is the error made by the students by omitting affixes that have to be added to make the construction correct. The students, for example, missed to write “s” or “es” at the final of the verb. The samples of the omission error can be seen in the table 9 as follows.

**Table 9. Omission Errors Made by the Students**

Omission Types	Errors Sample	Correction	Omission	Frequency
Simple present	The researcher want to describe the researcher also want to know what dominant mistakes descriptive text consist	The researcher wants to describe the researcher also wants to know what dominant mistakes descriptive text consists	“S”	14
Plural	These problem two of those skill	these problems two of those skills	S	2
passive voice	Documentation is commonly use to obtain	Documentation is commonly used to obtain	“ed”	5
Gerund	the hypothesis test by count the Correlation Analysis	the hypothesis test is by counting the Correlation Analysis		1
auxiliary verb to be	English First (a large English teaching provider with branches all over the world) that has used by governments	English First (a large English teaching provider with branches all over the world) that has been used by governments		2

The table 9 above presents that the students had omission errors when they were writing their research proposal. They had omission in the following aspects: (1) simple present tense, (2) general plural form, (3) passive voice construction, (4) gerund form, and (5) auxiliary verb to be. Based on the table 9, omission on the simple present tense is indicated by missing its indicator, such as “s” at the final of the verb “want” and “consist”. They also had omission error in the regular plural form by leaving the plural indicator “s” in the final noun “problem”. Besides that, the students had omission in constructing the passive voice “documentation is commonly use to obtain”. In addition, the students had omission error in writing the gerund form leaving the “ing” suffix at the end of verb “test” and they left the auxiliary verb “been” in the construction of passive voice such as in “English First (a large English teaching provider with branches all over the world) that has used by governments”.

### *Misformation*

Misformation is the use of wrong form in construction the words or pattern. The students as the researchers or writers of the seminar research proposal had some errors

in making passive construction and the tenses. The samples of the misformation can be seen the table 10 as follows.

**Table 10.** Types of misformation errors made by the students in writing the research proposal

Misformation classification	Error forms	Errors Sample	Correction	Respondents	Frequency
Future Tense	Simple Past tense	This study used a classroom action research (CAR) design	This study will use	8	10
	voice				16
Simple past	Passive Past continuous	The observation concentrated on how discovery learning processes were being applied and experiment report writing abilities.	The observation will be concentrated on how discovery learning processes will be being applied and experiment report writing abilities.		3
	Plural				singular
Past participle	Present	The research will be conduct at	The research will be conducted at		1
Plural Auxiliary verb to be	Singular	the objectives of this study is:	the objectives of this study are:		3
Ordinal number	Cardinal number	at the seven grade	at the seventh grade		1
Possessive Adjective	Male possessive adjective	Dian as second advisor who has given his time and knowledge	Dian as second advisor who has given her time and knowledge		1

Based on the data shown in table 10 above, it is clear that the students had error in forming English construction. It is found that there are 37 misformation errors from 8 students, as the research proposal writers, in using the tense in research proposal. Research proposal is what the researcher is going to do in the next activities. The students as the researchers used past event expression in writing the research proposal. The students had various misformation errors, such as misformation error in writing proposal tenses. The total students who had misformation in tenses are 29.

The table 10 displayed the kinds of misformation errors in: (1) future action, (2) plural, (3) past participle, (4) singular, (5) plural auxiliary (to be), (6) ordinal number, and (7) possessive adjective. Based on the data presented in the table 10 above, it can be identified that the students as the research proposal writers have misformation error in using the planning action. They not only had misformation error but also misinterpretation. They were not aware of using the tense used in writing a research proposal. In writing a research proposal they should use an action which will be done in the future. The future action that can be used is simple future tense and be going to.

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Most of the students used past event in writing their research proposal such as “this study used classroom action research”. The expression “This study used classroom action research” should be written “this study will use classroom action research”. It is a research proposal that activities of the research will be done in future time, so the writers or researchers have not done the activities of the research yet. It is still the planning of activities of the research in the future time.

The student had misformation in forming the passive voice form. Based on the result of the research stated in the table, it is known that the student experiences error in making the ordinal number such as ”at the seven grade”. To make the ordinal number, the student should add “th” at the final of the word “seven”. Then, the form is “seventh” grade. This number is to indicate the rank or level.

#### *Misordering*

Misordering is characterized by the wrong form. The students wrote the English construction based on the students’ language. It can be seen in the table 11 below.

**Table 11.** Misordering classification made by the students in writing proposal

<b>Misordering classification</b>	<b>Errors</b>	<b>Correction</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Future passive voice	This will be negative sentence by adding not after to be	This negative sentence will be added by adding not after to be.	1

Based on the data shown in the table 11, it can be seen that the student made misordering error when writing the research proposal. The students had this misordering error in forming phrases. The example of this misordering error is the phrase “This will be negative sentence by adding not after to be”. This construction consists of passive future tense. It is indicated by the presence of “will” as one of the modal auxiliaries. In this construction, the writer had error in placing the auxiliary to be. The to be “be” should be put after the subject. The construction should be “This will be negative sentence by adding not after to be” should be “This negative sentence will be added by adding not after to be”.

### **Discussions**

#### *Reasons for Having errors*

The students as the writers of the research proposal had various errors because of their unawareness in writing the research proposals. They have not been familiar with the tense which is used in research proposal. The students saw the previous S1 research

available in the library and internet. The reasons of having errors can be seen in the following questionnaire results as follows.

**Table 12. Students' reasons for having errors**

Question	Respondents	Reasons
Why do you have errors in the following types of error?		
Addition	1	I forgot to add the to be I did not pay attention to the presence of be I forgot to delete I followed my friends I did not pay attention I saw my fiends' proposal
Omission		I did not write carefully I forget to add "s" I forgot to add "s" Mistyping
Misformation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	I saw the thesis in the library I followed my friends I saw the thesis in the library I have not known if the research proposal uses planning verbs I did not check the passive forms I did not check the agreement of the subject and the verb. I think the tense of research proposal thesis and thesis is the same I saw the thesis in the library
Misordering	1	I felt complicated when constructing the English word orders of more than two constructions.

Based on the table 12 above, it is known that the students had grammatical errors when they wrote their research proposals. They had addition, omission, misformation and misordering errors. These errors are due to their personal factors. The reasons of having addition error were: (1) the students forgot to delete the to be, (2) they were not fully aware that the research proposal is still planning to do in the future, (3) they followed their friends, and they saw their friends' proposal writing.

To talk the future activities or action, the speakers or writers should use future tense. The formula of the future tense is: Subject + Will/Shall + Verb 1 (infinitive) + Object. The students used simple past in writing their research proposals. They used active simple past tense and passive simple past tense. It is reasonable to use simple past tense in their research proposal writing. They saw the thesis in the library which are written in the simple past tense form.

*Solution of Decreasing Error in Writing the Research Proposal*

Based on the questionnaire distributed to the students as the respondents, they had solutions to overcome their grammatical error in writing the research proposal. Their solutions can be displayed in the following table 13.

**Table 13.** Students' solution to reduce grammatical errors in writing the research proposals

Respondents	Solutions
1	To decrease the grammatical error in making the research proposal, it is better to be checked by our upper class. We are asked them to read our research proposal.
2	For me, it is better for us to check and recheck our research proposal before submitting to our advisors. We read and read again to minimize our grammatical errors.
3	I think we have to comprehend the research proposal grammar by reading the research proposal in the library.
4	I think it is done by reading the grammar books and understand these books.
5	Yes. I have to ask my friends to read my research proposal to decrease my errors in grammar.
6	We have to ask more than one friend to read our research proposal before submitting to our advisors. It is to minimize the grammatical error in writing the research proposal. Before the research proposals are being
7	I consult my advisors before writing the research proposal

Based on the data presented in the table 13 above, it can be said that students had various solutions to overcome their grammatical errors in writing the research proposals. The research proposal writing can be eliminated by the help of the upper-class students checking. Our upper-class students had written the research proposals before the lower class. They had experienced in writing the research proposal before the lower upper-class students wrote the research proposals. They had consulted their advisors when they wrote their research proposals. Besides, they had also had done the research in the fields after having their research proposal. By having this experience, the upper-class students can be used as the reference of checking the grammatical error in writing the research proposal.

To overcome the students' grammatical errors in research proposal writing, the students also had other solutions. They tried to check and recheck again the research proposal draft before submitting to the advisors. It takes more time to check the research proposal accurately. It also needs the convenient condition to have good result in checking the draft. Checking the draft needs concentration and high thinking. English language has complicated affixation and structure. The checking of the research proposal draft should not be done in a hurry situation. It is hard to check and correct the English constructions.

Other students thought that before writing the research proposal draft, they had to read English grammar books to remind their knowledge in English construction. Besides, there was student who thought that it is better for her to consult directly to the advisors before writing the research proposal. Based on this answer, it is the simplest way to decrease the grammatical errors and also the content of the research proposal. But one thing that should be remembered by the student is in connection with the attitudes.

Having errors in learning a language is unavoidable. Constructing English pattern needs high thinking. English structures are not the same as the students' first language such as tribal and national language. Their first language is local or tribal language such as Javanese or Lampungnese language. Meanwhile, their national language is Indonesian language. The students felt unsure in writing the long English construction. The English phrase construction is that the adjective precedes noun. It means that modifier comes before the modified words such as "the second meaningful statements". The headword is "statement" and the modifiers are "the second"(Matthews, 2006). The current research finding in misordering is supported by the previous research. The previous researcher found that the students found difficulty in making English phrases (Sarmadani et al., 2021; Sitorus & Sipayung, 2018).

Based on the data presented in the table 10 above, it can be identified that the students as the research proposal writers had misformation error in using the planning action. They not only had misformation error but also misinterpretation. They were not aware of using the tense used in writing a research proposal. In writing a research proposal they should use an action which will be done in the future. The future action that can be used is simple future tense and be going to. Most of the students used past event in writing their research proposal such as "this study used classroom action research". The expression "This study used classroom action research" should be written "this study will use classroom action research". It is a research proposal that activities of the research will be done in future time, so the writers or researchers have not done the activities of the research yet. It is still the planning of activities of the research in the future time (Nelson & Greenbaum, 2016). The regulation to change verb into noun has no certain rule, such as the verb "develop" becomes "development". Nevertheless, this regulation is not the same as in the verb "divide". To make noun from the verb "divide" is by adding suffix "ision" at the end of the verb "divide", such as in "division". This change needs the English language learners think hard if they do not want to open their English grammar book before writing their research proposals (Matthews, 2006).

## CONCLUSION

Writing research proposal for the students of English as a foreign language is not as easy as writing in the students' native language. The students had grammatical errors in writing their research proposals. The types of errors made by the students are addition, omission, misformation, and misordering. They added some items that should not present in the construction. They had addition errors 18. The students also had omission errors 33. They had misformation errors 37 and misordering error 1. The factors of these error types happened because the students did not check their research proposal grammar carefully. Besides that, they also saw the thesis available in the library without paying attention to the tenses used in the research proposals. They also only followed their friends in writing then research proposals. In reducing the research proposal grammatical errors, they asked their upper-class students to read and check their research proposal. They also asked their friends to read their research proposal before submitting to their advisors. They students also consulted to their advisors. It is important to check and recheck the research proposal grammar before submitting to the advisors or supervisors. It is done to revise the possible errors made by the students. Further researchers should conduct the research in more respondents and more universities to make the results of the research more comprehensive.

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