An Analysis of Grammatical Errors in Thesis Abstracts and Strategies for Improvement

Sari Dewi Noviyanti
Faculty of Ushuluddin and Humanities UIN Walisongo, Semarang, Indonesia
Email: sari.dewi@walisongo.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study examines grammatical errors in English-language thesis abstracts by students at an Islamic Higher Education institution in Central Java and proposes strategies for improvement. Employing a mixed-methods design, the research analyzed 50 randomly selected abstracts from seven faculties, published between 2021 and 2023, using James' (1998) error analysis framework (grammatical, substantive, lexical, syntactic, and semantic errors) and APA 7th edition guidelines. Data collection involved quantitative error categorization and qualitative insights from surveys and interviews with students and stakeholders. Findings reveal 2,616 errors, with grammatical (24%), substantive (21%), and lexical (23%) errors being most prevalent, alongside incomplete structures in 80% of abstracts. Key causes include interlingual (L1 interference) and intralingual (English complexity) factors, compounded by inadequate guidelines and oversight. These errors undermine clarity and credibility in academic writing. The study recommends providing clear abstract writing guidelines, specialized courses, workshops, and robust evaluation systems, including grammar-checking tools and faculty-led reviews, to enhance writing quality. Implications suggest that improved training can elevate students' scholarly communication skills and institutional academic standards. Limitations include the small sample size (50 abstracts), which may not fully represent the student population, and a sole focus on English writing. Future research should expand sampling, explore error causes qualitatively, and assess intervention effectiveness longitudinally.

Keywords: *English grammatical errors, improvement strategies, thesis abstracts*

Introduction

As a final-year college student or prospective graduates, students will face research assignments to complete their studies. Conducting research is the main requirement imposed by universities to graduate from university. This is implemented because students, as academics, will be considered to have contributed to their knowledge when they can conduct research and express it in scientific papers. Scientific papers are a series of writing activities based on research and a series of scientific studies systematically arranged by following scientific rules, including applicable grammar (Zulmiyatri et al., 2019). This study focuses on analyzing English grammatical errors in thesis abstracts due to their critical role in summarizing research and their increasing importance in academic settings, particularly at Islamic universities like UIN Walisongo Semarang, where English proficiency varies widely among students. The choice of this topic stems from the need to address persistent grammatical challenges that undermine the quality of scientific communication, an issue observed in prior studies and institutional feedback, yet insufficiently tackled with practical solutions. According to O'Sullivan and Jefferson (2020), proper grammar increases the clarity and accuracy of information, which is essential in conveying research findings. Witchel et al (2020) emphasized that grammatical errors in abstracts can reduce the credibility of scientific papers, making it difficult for readers to understand the essence of the research presented. Therefore, the analysis of English grammatical errors in the abstracts of UIN Walisongo Semarang students' theses aims to identify and understand the types of errors that often occur so that recommendations can be provided to improve the quality of scientific writing among students.

Several grammatical elements must be considered in writing scientific papers to ensure clarity and formality. First, the use of

clear and concise sentences is essential. Concise and clear sentences help readers understand complex ideas better (Luby & Southern, 2022; Rahyab & Fakor, 2023). In addition, the selection of the right words, including relevant technical terms, must be done so that the message to be conveyed does not confuse the reader, considering that Goldstein et al. (2020) and Intemann (2023) state that the use of appropriate and relevant terms is the key to avoiding confusion in scientific communication. Standard sentence structure should also be prioritized by adequately paying attention to the subject, predicate, and object. Barroga and Matanguihan (2020) and Putra et al. (2023) emphasize that good sentence structure facilitates a logical flow of thought in scientific work. In addition, consistency in the use of tenses, such as the past tense to describe the research that has been done, is also very important, as stated by Drozdova (2023) that adhering to tense consistency in scientific writing is important to maintain clarity and continuity of information. By paying attention to these grammatical elements, authors can present research more professionally and can be well understood by the audience.

In previous studies, many studies have discussed grammatical errors made in writing scientific papers. Bukit (2020) found that errors in the use of tense often occur among students, confusing understanding of the temporal relationship between research and its results, stating that errors in the use of tense can confuse the interpretation of research results. In addition, Hardi et al. (2022) highlighted the problem of sentence structure, where students often needed help constructing sentences correctly. They noted that the mismatch between subject and predicate often obscured the intended meaning. Research by Musheke and Phiri (2021) also emphasized the importance of choosing the right words, stating that errors in the use of technical terms can lead to miscommunication, which is detrimental to the credibility of scientific work. Furthermore, Yen (2021) showed that many students need to pay more attention to correct punctuation, stating that ignoring proper punctuation can disrupt the flow of reading and understanding the content of the writing. Finally, Silveira (2022) revealed that a lack of understanding of formal writing rules is a major cause of grammatical errors. The importance of training

in scientific writing must be considered so that students can avoid making the same mistakes. The overall findings of these studies indicate that grammatical errors can reduce the quality of scientific writing, making it essential to improve education and guidance in this aspect.

Although several studies have discussed grammatical errors in writing scientific papers, gaps still need to be considered, especially in the context of student research abstracts at Islamic universities. For example, Bukit (2020) found that errors in using tenses often occur among students, confusing the temporal relationship between research and its results. This study, although providing essential insights, only focuses on the use of tenses and covers some aspects of grammar that can affect the quality of abstract writing. Hardi et al. (2022) highlighted the sentence structure problem, noting that a mismatch between subject and predicate often obscures meaning. However, the focus of this study was limited to subject agreement alone, without exploring other grammatical aspects that may contribute to abstract writing errors. In addition, studies by Musheke and Phiri (2021), who emphasized the importance of choosing the right words, and Yen (2021), who showed the neglect of correct punctuation, provide an overview of some grammatical aspects that are often overlooked. However, these studies need to provide a systemic solution to overcome these errors when writing scientific papers in an academic environment. Silveira (2022) revealed that a lack of understanding of formal writing rules is the leading cause of grammatical errors.

While these studies collectively underscore the prevalence of grammatical errors in academic writing, they predominantly address isolated aspects (e.g., tense, structure, or punctuation) and rarely focus on thesis abstracts, a critical component of scientific papers. Moreover, their scope often excludes non-native English speakers in specialized contexts like Islamic higher education, where language proficiency varies widely. This study differs by comprehensively analyzing multiple error types, grammatical, substantive, lexical, syntactic, and semantic, in English thesis abstracts at UIN Walisongo Semarang, using James' (1998) framework. Unlike prior research, it integrates quantitative error profiling with qualitative insights from students and stakeholders, addressing a

research gap by not only identifying errors but also proposing systemic strategies (e.g., guidelines, courses, and evaluations) tailored to this unique academic environment. This dual approach distinguishes the present work, filling a void in both contextual specificity and practical application.

This study analyzes English grammatical errors in thesis abstracts by students at UIN Walisongo Semarang, an Islamic Higher Education institution in Central Java, and proposes strategies to enhance writing quality. The choice of this topic arises from the critical role abstracts play in summarizing research and the persistent grammatical challenges that undermine their clarity and credibility, particularly among non-native English speakers in Islamic academic settings. While prior studies have identified grammatical issues in scientific writing, few have focused on thesis abstracts within Islamic universities or offered actionable institutional strategies, revealing a research gap that necessitates this study. By identifying error types and their causes in this context, and proposing tailored solutions, this research bridges the gap between error analysis and practical improvement, aiming to elevate the quality of scientific communication at UIN Walisongo Semarang and similar institutions.

From the previous explanation, it is necessary to research what English language errors are made by students at Islamic Higher Education when writing abstracts. English abstracts in the last three years were analyzed to profile the most common errors in writing English abstracts. The results of this study are expected to be the basis for policy analysis for stakeholders in efforts to improve student writing competence and the quality of student scientific work, which, of course, will significantly impact the institution's quality as a whole. Based on this background, this study carries several research problems, namely the types of English grammar errors in writing abstracts of an Islamic Higher Education in Central Java, as well as the causal factors affecting these errors

Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, as outlined by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), to produce detailed descriptive data from written texts, specifically English-language thesis abstracts from graduate students at an Islamic Higher Education institution in Central Java, spanning 2021 to 2023. This approach is apt for capturing nuanced language use and errors in a naturalistic context. The population includes all English-language thesis abstracts from this period, from which 50 abstracts were selected using stratified random sampling, ensuring proportional representation across faculties. The sampling process involved compiling a faculty-categorized list of abstracts, determining proportional representation, and using a random number generator for selection. A data extraction template, capturing abstract text, faculty, year, and initial error observations, served as the data collection instrument, with abstracts accessed ethically from the institution's digital repository.

Data analysis was guided by James' (1998) language error theory, categorizing errors as grammatical (e.g., adjectives, verbs), substantive (e.g., punctuation, spelling), lexical (e.g., word choice), syntactic (e.g., sentence structure), and semantic (e.g., ambiguous communication). Analysis involved manually coding abstracts using a coding sheet aligned with these categories, tallying error frequencies, and qualitatively interpreting patterns to assess their impact on clarity and academic quality. NVivo software supported data organization. For validity, triangulation was achieved by cross-checking interpretations with two applied linguistics experts, who reviewed 20% of the sample, resolving discrepancies through discussion. Data elasticity, per Bogdan and Biklen (1982), was ensured by iteratively reviewing abstracts over two weeks to confirm comprehensive error identification. Reliability was established through intra-rater checks, re-analyzing 30% of the sample after a week, and inter-rater checks with a colleague coding five abstracts, targeting an 85% agreement rate, with peer debriefing to address bias.

Findings were synthesized into descriptive narratives detailing error frequency, types, and implications, presented to students and faculty in a workshop with visual aids like error distribution charts. The workshop proposed strategies, such as language training and peer reviews, to enhance abstract quality. Grounded in Bogdan and Biklen's qualitative framework and James' error analysis theory, this methodology ensures clarity, justification, and replicability for future studies.

Findings and Discussion

The total number of abstracts of theses from all faculties at an Islamic Higher Education

in Central Jawa in year 2021-2023 period is 6755 abstracts. However, not all these include English abstracts. From the total numbers of English abstracts, this study randomly chose and analyzed 50 abstracts under James' (1998) theory of language errors, which consists of five categories of errors including grammatical errors (adjectives, adverbs, articles, nouns, possessives, pronouns, prepositions and verbs), substantive errors (capitalization, punctuation and spelling), lexical errors (word formation and word choice), syntactic errors (coordination/subordination, sentence structure and order), and semantic errors (ambiguous communication and miscommunication).

Types of Errors

Overall grammatical errors, which include grammatical, substantive, lexical, syntactic and semantic errors from 50 thesis abstracts analyzed, amounted to 2616 error items with the following details:

Table 1
Grammatical Errors

No	Type of Errors	Amount	Percentage
1	Grammatical	622	24%
2	Substance	564	21%
3	Lexical	596	23%
4	Syntaxes	383	15%
5	Semantics	451	17%
TOTAL		2616	100%

Table 1 displays the distribution of grammatical errors across five categories, with their respective amounts and percentages. The total number of errors is 2,616, equating to 100%. The breakdown is as follows: Grammatical errors are the most common at 622 (24%), followed by Semantic errors at 564 (21%), Lexical errors at 596 (23%), Syntactic errors at 383 (15%), and Semantic errors again at 451 (17%). This table highlights that grammatical issues are the most frequent, while syntactic errors are the least common among the categories listed.

Grammatical errors include errors in the use of adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, and verbs.

Table 2
Grammatical Errors

No	Type of Errors	Amount	Percentage
1	adjective	73	12%
2	adverbs	40	6%
3	articles	100	16%
4	nouns	96	15%
5	possession	45	7%
6	pronouns	48	8%
7	preposition	79	13%
8	verbs	141	23%

Total	622	100%

Table 2 details the distribution of grammatical errors from Table 1, focusing on specific types. The total number of grammatical errors is 622, matching the "Grammatical" category from Table 1, and represents 100% of this subset. The breakdown is as follows: verbs are the most common error type at 141 (23%), followed by prepositions at 79 (13%), articles at 100 (16%), nouns at 96 (15%), pronouns at 48 (8%), possession at 45 (7%), adjectives at 73 (12%), and adverbs at 40 (6%). This table shows that verb-related errors are the most frequent within grammatical errors, while adverb errors are the least common.

Examples of the most frequent verb errors are errors in choosing verbs according to their subjects, using active and passive sentences, and inconsistent verbs with the tenses used. One example found in the sentence "this research conducted by," the error lies in using the passive sentence, which is not quite right. The correct correction is "this research is conducted through" by adding "is" and using a more appropriate verb to form the correct passive sentence.

The grammatical errors in using articles mostly related to the mistake of the use article a or an and overgeneralization of the use of "the". One example was found in the sentence "an order of Asmāul-Ḥusnā," the error lies in using "a" before a word that begins with a vowel. The correct correction is "an order of Asmāul-Ḥusnā."

Table 3 breaks down the "Semantic" errors, which total 564, aligning with the 100% in this table. It categorizes these errors into three types: Punctuation errors are the most frequent at 321 (57%), followed by Capitalization errors at 128 (23%), and Spelling errors at 115 (20%). This table indicates that punctuation issues dominate semantic errors, while spelling errors are the least common within this category.

Table 3
Substantive Errors

No	Type of Errors	Amount	Percentage
1	Capitalization	128	23%
2	Punctuation	321	57%
3	Spelling	115	20%
	Total	564	100%

The use of punctuation become the most common mistakes in substantive errors. One example was found in a sentence "The mean score from the post-test for the

experimental class is 75.3 and for the control class is 60.6,". There is a comma placement error that disrupts the flow of the sentence. The correct correction is "The mean score from the post-test for the experimental class is 75.3, while the control class is 60.6.", where the use of a comma after the number 75.3 and the replacement of "and" with "while" helps clarify the comparison between the two groups.

Errors related to capitalization and formatting also found in students' abstracts. One example is the use for abbreviation for unofficial term of translation, "MGMP (Subject Teachers Consultation)" lies in error of use of capitalization. Although the abbreviation "MGMP" is spelt correctly, the phrase "Subject Teachers Consultation" should be written in lowercase unless it is not an official name. The correct correction is "MGMP (subject teachers' consultation)."

Lexical errors include errors in word formation and inappropriate word choices. The following table presents the distribution of errors related to lexical use.

Table 4
Lexical Errors

No	Type of Errors	Amount	Percentage
1	Words Formation	284	48%
2	Words Choice	312	52%
	Total	596	100%

Table 4 details the "Lexical" errors totaling 596. It categorizes these errors into two types: Words Choice errors are the most common at 312 (52%), followed by Words Formation errors at 284 (48%). This table shows that issues with word choice slightly outnumber errors in word formation within the lexical error category. Students tend to choose informal words, which are not suitable for scientific papers. One example is, "From this case, the writer tries to see it through the eyes of Islamic law as a reference," uses the phrase "tries to see it through the eyes", which sounds informal and inappropriate in an academic context. A more appropriate correction would be, "The writer attempts to analyze it through the lens of Islamic law as a reference," which is more formal and appropriate in describing the analysis process.

Syntactic errors include sentence coordination/subordination, sentence structure and sentence order. The following table presents the distribution of this type of errors.
Table 5

Syntactical Errors

No	Type of Errors	Amount	Percentage
1	Coordination/ subordination	112	29%
2	Sentence structure	179	47%
3	Sentence order	92	24%
	Total	383	100%

Based on the table 5, sentence structure is the most common errors found in students abstracts related to syntactical errors. Sentence Structure errors are the most common at 179 (47%), followed by Coordination/Subordination errors at 112 (29%), and Sentence Order errors at 92 (24%). This table indicates that sentence structure issues are the most frequent within syntactic errors, while sentence order errors are the least common. One example of this mistake made by students is, "To analyze the data that has been collected, the authors use content analysis techniques or content analysis as a research data analysis method," suffers from redundancy with the repetition of the term "content analysis." The correction is "The collected data will be analyzed using content analysis techniques," which removes the repetition and simplifies the sentence. Next, sentence coordination and sub coordination errors occupy the second position with the most errors, with as many errors as 112 (29%). An example of an error in sentence coordination/sub-coordination is as follows, "The case of the destruction of the Al Kautsar mosque belonging to the Ahmadiyah Congregation in Purworejo Village, Ringinarum District, Kendal Regency in 2016 aroused the awareness of many parties. Where cases of crimes with religious nuances seem inseparable from the problems of this nation,". This sentence faces a problem with using a clause that begins with "Where," which is inappropriate because it should be a subordinate clause. The correction is "The case of the destruction of the Al Kautsar mosque belonging to the Ahmadiyah Congregation in Purworejo Village, Ringinarum District, Kendal Regency in 2016 aroused the awareness of many parties. This case highlights how crimes with religious nuances are deeply intertwined with the nation's problems," which separates the clauses clearly and connects ideas more effectively.

Semantic errors include ambiguous words/sentences and miscommunication in conveying information/meaning.

Table 6
Semantic Errors

No	Type of Errors	Amount	Percentage
1	Ambiguity	295	65%
2	Miscommunication	156	35%
	Total	451	100%

Table 6 categorizes semantic errors into two types: Ambiguity errors are the most common at 295 (65%), followed by Miscommunication errors at 156 (35%). The term "Miscommunication" is underlined with a red squiggly line, possibly indicating a formatting or spelling issue. This table shows that ambiguity issues significantly outnumber miscommunication errors within the semantic error category. The problem of ambiguity become the most common problems in students' abstract if sentence level. One example found is, "The results of the study concluded that the inhibiting factors for the BSI KCP Jepara Pemuda 2 bank through fee-based income were the lack of placement of ATMs in the middle of the community, lack of public knowledge about products and financing transactions for example e-channels, Mobile Banking,". This sentence has ambiguity problems, such as the use of the phrase "the results of the study concluded" can be misleading because "results" typically refer to findings rather than conclusions, then it's not clear what "middle of the community" specifically refers to, whether is it a geographic center, or does it imply areas with higher foot traffic? This lack of specificity can lead to different interpretations. The correct correction is, "The study found that factors impeding fee-based income at BSI KCP Jepara Pemuda 2 Bank included insufficient ATM locations, limited public awareness of banking products and services such as e-channels and Mobile Banking." This correction clarifies the statement by replacing ambiguous phrases with more specific ones. For miscommunication, one example found is, "This research was conducted at Kahfi Koi Giri which aims to examine how the pattern applied to koi fish cultivation in Giri Village is an effort to empower the surrounding Muslim community to increase people's income.". There is a mistake in the sentence structure that confuses. It is not clear whether the research aimed to examine the pattern or the impact of the pattern. The correct correction is, "This research, conducted at Kahfi Koi Giri, aims to examine how the koi fish cultivation practices in Giri Village

contribute to empowering the local Muslim community and increasing their income." This correction clarifies the purpose of the research, which is to examine how koi fish cultivation practices in Giri Village can empower the local Muslim community and increase their income.

Related to APA 7th edition, the analyses conducted based on the word count and format conformity, the abstract refers to the APA 7th edition. The findings presented below:

Table 7
Errors based on APA 7th edition

No	Type of Errors	Amount	Percentage
1	Words	20	40%
2	Format	41	82%
	Total	61	100%

Table 7 categorizes errors based on the APA 7th edition style guide, with a total of 61 errors, representing 100%. It lists two types: Words Formatting errors are the most common at 41 (82%), followed by Words errors at 20 (40%). The percentages seem inconsistent, as they sum to 122% instead of 100%, suggesting a possible calculation error. Additionally, the "Words Formatting" label has a red squiggly underline, indicating a potential formatting or spelling issue. This table highlights that formatting issues dominate APA 7th edition errors. It shows that out of 50 abstracts, 20 abstracts still exceed the standard word count of 250 words. In terms of format, 41 abstracts do not meet the APA standards, as they are missing one or more required components of an abstract, such as the literature review, the problem being investigated or the research question, a clearly stated hypothesis, the methods used (including a brief description of the study design, sample, and sample size), research results, and implications (i.e., why this research is important, the application of the results or findings)

Cause of Errors

Mistakes which caused by interlingual factor happened due to the influence of the learner's first language (L1) on the target language (L2). The most common error found is translating from Indonesian to English without understanding the context of the sentence and choosing more appropriate words. One example of errors due to the influence of the first language is, "To identify this phenomenon, researchers use a phenomenological approach and a functional reception of the Qur'an as a knife to know the purpose behind this

tradition,". There is an error in the translation from Indonesian to English, especially in the use of the word "knife" which is not by the context. The word is more appropriately replaced with "tool" to describe the analysis tool. A more appropriate correction would be, "To identify this phenomenon, researchers use a phenomenological approach and a functional reception of the Qur'an as a tool to understand the purpose behind this tradition," which provides a more accurate understanding of the research approach.

Intralingual errors occur due to the complexity of the English language rather than the influence of the learner's native language. These errors are common among learners from various backgrounds and can arise from overgeneralization, simplification, or confusion with English grammar rules. This type of error is most often found in the use of articles. One example of errors due to the influence of the first language factor is, "since the globalization," which contains an error in using the unnecessary article "the." In this context, "globalization" is a general term that does not require an article, so the correct correction is "Since globalization." Another example is, "by way of deliberation and consensus with the BPD, village officials, and other community representatives," which presents two main errors. First, the excessive use of the preposition "of" and the excessive article "the." The use of the preposition "of" after "by the way" is unnecessary, and the article "the" before "BPD" is also unnecessary because BPD is a specific acronym. The correct correction is "through deliberation and consensus with BPD, village officials, and other community representatives," simplifying the sentence without losing meaning.

Proposed Effective Strategies

In this study, interviews were conducted with several stakeholders, including lecturers, the academic vice dean, and relevant faculty members, to gather their views on the importance of a systematic procedure for reducing errors in English abstract publication. The interview results showed that most faculties agree on the need for a more structured system to reduce errors in abstract publication, particularly with the provision of clear guidelines and the use of a final abstract checking system through the faculty. The stakeholders believe that with comprehensive guidelines, students can more easily understand the structure of abstract writing that meets the

required academic standards, thereby minimizing errors.

The proposed strategies include the initial process of writing an abstract, begins with preparation that involves initial training and the provision of guidelines for students. The faculty can organize academic writing workshops that address grammar and the structure of abstract writing, as well as develop guidelines that include examples, common errors, and grammar tips. Additionally, English courses can be integrated with the analysis of academic texts in the form of abstracts to familiarize students with the correct structure and grammar. After this preparation, students begin the abstract writing stage by following the provided guidelines, paying attention to correct structure and grammar.

The next stage is the evaluation of the abstract, where instructors provide written feedback on the grammar errors found. Supervising lecturers also give initial feedback and suggest the use of grammar-checking software, such as Grammarly, before the draft is submitted. The faculty or language center may also provide grammar-checking services to support students in improving their academic work. After receiving feedback, students are required to revise their abstracts based on suggestions from the instructor and peer reviews to produce a better abstract.

As a follow-up, the faculty can conduct surveys to assess students' understanding of grammar after participating in the training and workshops. This process should also be complemented by regular reviews and updates to the standard operating procedures (SOP), based on feedback from students and lecturers, so that the abstract writing process becomes more effective and relevant to academic needs.

Discussion

The analysis of 2,616 errors across 50 English-language thesis abstracts from an Islamic Higher Education institution in Central Java reveals significant linguistic challenges that undermine the clarity and credibility of students' academic writing. By applying James' (1998) error analysis framework, this study categorizes errors into grammatical (24%), substantive (21%), lexical (23%), syntactic (15%), and semantic (17%) types, offering a comprehensive profile of language issues in a context where English is a second or foreign language. These findings align with prior research but also provide new insights by situating error patterns

within the unique academic and cultural setting of Islamic Higher Education, where English proficiency varies widely due to limited exposure and training (Hardi et al., 2022; Silveira, 2022).

Grammatical errors, particularly in verb usage (23% of grammatical errors), reflect students' struggles with tense consistency and subject-verb agreement, corroborating Bukit's (2020) findings that tense errors often obscure temporal relationships in academic writing. However, this study extends Bukit's work by identifying verb errors as a dominant issue in thesis abstracts, a critical yet underexplored component of scientific papers. The prevalence of verb errors may stem from interlingual interference, as students directly translate Indonesian verb forms into English, a phenomenon noted by Brown (2000) in non-native English writing. This insight suggests that targeted grammar instruction focusing on verb conjugation and tense usage is essential in this context, where students' L1 heavily influences L2 production.

Substantive errors, dominated by punctuation issues (57%), highlight a critical gap in students' mastery of academic writing conventions. Yen (2021) similarly found that punctuation errors disrupt reading flow and comprehension, but this study's findings reveal a higher prevalence in abstracts, likely due to the condensed nature of the genre, which demands precision in limited space (Cava, 2011). The frequent misuse of commas and capitalization in the abstracts suggests a lack of familiarity with formal writing standards, a problem exacerbated by inadequate institutional guidelines, as identified through stakeholder interviews. This contextual insight underscores the need for explicit punctuation training tailored to abstract writing, extending Yen's broader observations into a specific academic setting.

Lexical errors, particularly in word choice (52%), indicate students' tendency to use informal or inappropriate terms, aligning with Musheke and Phiri's (2021) assertion that incorrect terminology undermines scientific credibility. Unlike prior studies, which often focus on general academic writing, this research highlights lexical errors as a significant barrier in thesis abstracts, where precise terminology is crucial for summarizing complex research (Graf, 2008). The informal language observed, such as "tries to see it through the eyes," reflects a lack of exposure to academic discourse conventions,

a challenge noted by Silveira (2022) in non-native English contexts. This finding suggests that vocabulary training should emphasize formal register and discipline-specific terms, particularly for Islamic Higher Education students navigating multilingual academic environments.

Syntactic errors, with sentence structure issues being the most common (47%), reveal difficulties in constructing coherent and concise sentences, a problem also noted by Barroga and Matanguihan (2020). The redundancy and coordination errors in the abstracts, such as repetitive phrases, reflect a broader struggle with English sentence complexity, as discussed by Luby and Southern (2022). This study's novelty lies in linking these errors to the cultural and educational context of Islamic Higher Education, where students often prioritize content over form due to limited English training. This insight calls for pedagogical interventions that emphasize sentence clarity and logical flow, tailored to the needs of non-native English speakers in religious academic settings.

Semantic errors, particularly ambiguity (65%), pose a significant threat to the clarity of abstracts, aligning with O'Sullivan and Jefferson's (2020) emphasis on the need for precise communication in scientific writing. The high rate of ambiguous phrases in this study, compared to general academic writing contexts, may be attributed to students' limited proficiency and the abstract's requirement for brevity, which amplifies the impact of unclear expressions (Hipp & Zoltan, 2005). By identifying ambiguity as a dominant issue in this specific context, the study extends prior research and highlights the need for training in semantic clarity, such as workshops on crafting concise yet precise summaries.

The causes of these errors, analyzed through James' (1998) framework, reveal a interplay of interlingual and intralingual factors. Interlingual errors, such as direct translations from Indonesian, align with Ellis' (1986) findings on L1 interference in L2 writing, but this study uniquely situates these errors within the Islamic academic context, where translation practices are influenced by religious and cultural terminology. Intralingual errors, such as overgeneralization of articles, reflect the inherent complexity of English grammar, as noted by Burt and Krashen (1982). The study's stakeholder interviews further reveal systemic

issues, such as the absence of standardized abstract writing guidelines, which exacerbate these errors, a finding not extensively explored in prior literature. This systemic perspective provides a novel contribution, suggesting that institutional reforms are as critical as individual training in addressing language errors.

The findings also have practical implications for improving academic writing quality. The high error rates and their alignment with APA 7th edition violations (e.g., 82% of abstracts failing format standards) underscore the need for structured interventions, such as those proposed by Mahayosnand (2024), who advocates for guideline-driven writing training. Unlike prior studies that focus on isolated error types, this research integrates error analysis with stakeholder-driven solutions, proposing a multi-stage process of preparation, drafting, feedback, and revision. This approach not only addresses immediate error correction but also builds long-term writing competence, offering a model that other Islamic and non-native English institutions can adopt.

In comparison to prior research, this study's focus on thesis abstracts in Islamic Higher Education fills a critical gap, as most studies, such as those by Hardi et al. (2022) and Musheke and Phiri (2021), address broader academic writing contexts or isolated error types. The integration of quantitative error profiling with qualitative insights from interviews and surveys provides a holistic understanding of the challenges, distinguishing this work from purely quantitative analyses (e.g., Bukit, 2020). Furthermore, the emphasis on systemic solutions, informed by stakeholder perspectives, responds to Silveira's (2022) call for comprehensive training in formal writing rules, offering a context-specific framework for enhancing scientific communication.

These insights highlight the urgency of addressing language errors in Islamic Higher Education, where abstracts serve as critical gateways to scholarly recognition. By identifying error patterns, their causes, and systemic deficiencies, this study provides a roadmap for educators and institutions to enhance writing quality, aligning with Drozdova's (2023) advocacy for consistent and clear scientific writing. The proposed strategies, grounded in empirical findings and stakeholder input, offer a scalable solution to elevate academic standards, ensuring that students' research is communicated with the clarity and professionalism required in global academic discourse.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of grammatical errors in English-language thesis abstracts by students at an Islamic Higher Education institution in Central Java, identifying 2,616 errors across grammatical, substantive, lexical, syntactic, and semantic categories, with grammatical errors (24%) being the most prevalent. By employing James' (1998) error analysis framework and Bogdan and Biklen's (1982) descriptive qualitative approach, the research reveals critical gaps in students' academic writing skills, particularly in verb usage, punctuation, and word choice, driven by interlingual (L1 interference) and intralingual (English26%) factors. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on thesis abstracts within the underexplored context of Islamic Higher Education, where English proficiency varies widely, and its integration of quantitative error profiling with qualitative insights from stakeholder interviews and student surveys. This dual approach not only profiles error patterns but also uncovers systemic issues, such as inadequate guidelines and oversight, which prior studies on academic writing in non-native English contexts have largely overlooked.

The significant contributions of this research include its actionable recommendations for improving abstract writing quality, such as structured guidelines, specialized English courses, academic writing workshops, and faculty-led evaluation systems incorporating grammar-checking tools. These strategies address the identified gaps and offer a replicable model for other institutions facing similar challenges. By proposing a systematic approach to abstract writing, encompassing preparation, drafting, feedback, and revision, the study contributes to the enhancement of scholarly communication skills and institutional academic standards. The findings also have broader implications, providing a framework for addressing language errors in other non-native English academic settings, thus advancing the global discourse on effective scientific writing.

Despite limitations, such as a sample size of 50 abstracts and a sole focus on English writing, the study's robust methodology and contextual specificity make it a pioneering effort in Islamic Higher Education research. Future research could expand the sample, explore error

causes through longitudinal qualitative methods, and evaluate the effectiveness of proposed interventions, further solidifying the study's impact. By bridging the gap between error analysis and practical solutions, this research empowers students, educators, and institutions to elevate the quality of academic writing, fostering greater clarity, credibility, and professionalism in scientific communication.

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