

## Grammar Mistakes of Engineering Students' Research Titles Writing in English

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**Abstract.** *In a research context, a research title is usually translated into English to provide appropriate understanding for all readers. However, grammar mistakes in translating it often occur. This research focuses on the grammar mistakes found in research titles (English version) of Engineering students at one of the universities in West Java. This research focuses on 105 Engineering students' research titles data and answers questions of what are the grammar mistakes found, and what are the students' perceptions regarding the process of translating their titles. By analyzing the titles data, this research found that, out of 105 titles, there are 93 titles with grammar mistakes. These consist of excessive use of definite articles in 69 titles, improper use of prepositions in 22 titles, and improper phrases in 33 titles. Then, the Engineering students' perceptions about their titles' translating process were gained from interviews to 5 of them. They were worried about translating it themselves due to their limited understanding of English which made them rely more on translation machines such as Google Translate and ChatGPT without the process of reviewing the translation results' meaning. The process of reviewing and increasing motivation that builds enthusiasm for learning grammar are needed.*

**Keywords:** *English research title, grammar, translation*

**Abstrak.** Pada konteks penelitian, judul penelitian biasanya diterjemahkan ke dalam Bahasa Inggris agar dapat memberikan pemahaman yang tepat bagi siapa saja pembacanya. Namun, kekeliruan tata bahasa dalam menerjemahkannya kerap terjadi. Penelitian ini fokus pada kekeliruan tata bahasa yang ditemukan pada judul penelitian (versi Bahasa Inggris) dari mahasiswa Teknik pada salah satu perguruan tinggi di Jawa Barat. Penelitian ini berfokus pada data judul penelitian 105 mahasiswa Teknik dan menjawab pertanyaan apa saja kesalahan tata bahasa yang ditemukan, dan apa persepsi mahasiswa mengenai proses penerjemahan judulnya. Dengan menganalisis data judul, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa dari 105 judul, terdapat 93 judul yang memiliki kekeliruan tata bahasa. Diantaranya adalah penggunaan kata sandang yang berlebihan pada 69 judul, penggunaan kata depan yang tidak tepat pada 22 judul, dan frasa yang tidak tepat pada 33 judul. Kemudian, persepsi mahasiswa tentang proses penerjemahan judul diperoleh dari wawancara kepada 5 orang dari mereka. Mereka khawatir untuk menerjemahkannya sendiri karena keterbatasan pemahaman Bahasa Inggris yang membuat mereka lebih mengandalkan mesin penerjemah seperti Google Translate dan Chat GPT tanpa adanya proses review makna dari hasil terjemahan. Proses peninjauan dan peningkatan motivasi yang membangun semangat belajar tata bahasa sangat diperlukan.

**Kata kunci:** Judul skripsi berbahasa Inggris, tata bahasa, terjemahan

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Research title is the main thing to concern in writing so that all of our research readers understand the context of it, they can imagine the contents of the research in accordance with what they are actually looking for as a source. Researchers often translate the title of their research into English as an international language so that the research can be understood by many readers in the world. However, grammar mistakes in the title translations sometimes occur and are misinterpreted by many readers. This research focuses on a phenomenon where the same thing happens to most of the research titles in the English version of Engineering students at one of the universities in West Java. There are many titles in English version that had to be revised due to grammar errors. On the other hand, English mastery is very necessary

for Engineering graduates as Shrestha, Pahari, and Awasthi (2015) reported that English is the most important language in the careers of engineering graduates throughout the world.

The phenomenon of dependency on using translation machines to translate has also become something that is common. For example, Google Translate, Ammade, Ramadhani, and Rahman (2023) found that this translation machine has helped language learners increase their vocabulary and practice pronunciation. However, it does not seem to be able to produce proper translation results that fit the desired context. Some perceptions were found about Google Translate, the speed and ease of using GT makes students lazy to double-check the meaning of the translation (Alburaih & Algraini, 2024). Many students show high dependence on Google Translate in translating their writing (Setiawan & Axelina, 2023). However, on the other hand, English language mastery factor is also the reason regarding errors in the use of grammar. Luthfiyati, Widyaishwara, and Anggraini (2023) stated that limited mastery of vocabulary and grammar affects writing ability, Ula (2021) added that apart from grammar, vocabulary mastery also influences it. At university level, EFL learners truly viewed grammar as difficult to learn and master (Komara & Tiarsiwi, 2021). This worsens the quality of the translation if students use it, yet do not have a good enough understanding of grammar.

In the context of research translation, many studies discuss grammatical errors in the abstract section as stated by some researchers (Fitria, 2020; Nurnalisa & Oktaviani, 2024; Vidhiyasi, 2024). However, it is no less important to discuss grammatical errors in writing titles, because the title is the first object read by readers to support their research sources. If the grammar is not appropriate, it will affect the meaning and context. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss what grammar mistakes need to be concerned when writing research titles in English, and the reasons why the mistakes occur based on the students' point of view, so that these mistakes can be anticipated and minimized to produce a translation that is acceptable both in terms of meaning and context.

A total of 105 Engineering students' research titles data (English version) were analyzed and 5 of the students were interviewed as respondents. By analyzing the data, these research results are expected to answer the questions of what are the grammar mistakes found, and what are the students' perceptions regarding the process of translating their titles. The authors hope that the results of this research provide good output in anticipation or efforts to minimize grammar mistakes in writing research titles in English.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A research title is an important thing to pay attention to when writing. This section discusses several studies related to English grammar mistakes and the use of translation machines as media commonly used in translating language.

### **Mistakes in English Grammar Use**

As a foreign speaker of English, grammar mistakes are something commonly occurring in using this language. Apart from that, in translating, a lack of understanding of arranging words into phrases or sentences makes the translation result inappropriate and difficult to understand. There are several grammars that may be applied inappropriately, such as the use of articles, noun phrases, and prepositions.

Titles are often made more concise and impactful without excessive use of articles. Removing articles can make the title clearer and more concise, thereby attracting the readers' attention more effectively. In titles, omitting the article from the noun is common (Walwork, 2012). The excessive use of definite articles makes the titles less interesting and not concise. Tullu (2019) stated that being concise is one of the keys in writing research titles to make it pleasant to read.

Another mistake that can be encountered is in the use of noun phrases. The ability to arrange nouns is one of the important things in the translation process. This is one aspect that is recommended to be studied more seriously in the translation process (Panjaitan, Sipayung, Damanik, & Tampubolon, 2023). In writing noun phrases, several errors are often encountered in word placement. As what was found in another research, there were three grammatical errors in writing research titles, those are word choice, placement of adjectives that should come before nouns, and use of prepositions (Liong, 2023). Placing adjectives after nouns might be influenced by Indonesian language culture which is accustomed to placing them like that. Liong (2023) also mentioned the errors in using prepositions.

Mistakes in the use of prepositions can also be found. Prepositions are words that are usually used before nouns to indicate direction, time, and place. However, sometimes foreign students still find it difficult to use them, they encounter several problems when using prepositions, such as a lack of knowledge about prepositions and a lack of understanding about the types of prepositions (Nachlisa, 2021). When writing titles, prepositions are usually used in the context of indicating the names of places and sections.

When we talk about grammatical errors, this probably cannot be separated from the researchers' habits in translating their research. One of them is the use of a translation machine. Several studies reveal that grammatical errors arise from the use of machine translation, for example in Google Translate (Fitria, 2021; Suhono, Zuniati, Pratiwi, & Hasyim, 2020; Suryani & Fitria, 2022), the translation results do not match the researcher's aims and objectives in terms of the grammar. However, the use of machine translation is sometimes unavoidable, causing dependency for its use.

### **Dependency in Using Translation Machine**

Technological advance affects almost everything in life, including the ease and speed of accessing machine translation. Google Translate is an example of translation machines. There are several reasons why many people use it, because it is easy and fast. Google Translate is able to provide fast and easy access, so this makes Google Translate well received and popular among students (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017).

Many studies reveal the advantages of using machine translation in translating texts, including, easy to use and can enrich vocabulary (Pham, Nguyen, Tran, Huynh, & Huynh, 2022; Tumbal, Liando, & Olii, 2021; Yanti & Meka, 2019). However, the translation results from this machine are considered less effective, it led to misunderstanding because of grammar errors found, require re-review, and make the users lazy. The users considered that it could only be used as a quick dictionary to improve vocabulary. In translating more than one word, we must double-check the translation results, as Wirantaka and Fijanah (2021) found that there are several effective strategies for using GT, including pre-editing, post editing and only using it for checking. Putri (2021) added, it is recommended that students focus more on their efforts in practicing rather than relying on its use.

Apart from GT, the current popular use is ChatGPT. It was mentioned that there are advantages of using ChatGPT, it can reorder sentences and suggest appropriate phrases (Giglio & Costa, 2023). ChatGPT can also translate text from one language to another and maintain the meaning and context of the original text (Baskara, 2023), and it is easy to use for translating text (Roza & Zulhirawati, 2023). However, as with GT, we must use it wisely by double-checking the translation results with an understanding of the appropriate use of grammar.

Using the literature sources above, this research synthesizes possible discoveries regarding what are the grammar mistakes found, and what are the students' perceptions regarding the process of translating their titles.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

By using descriptive analysis, this research answers, what are the grammar mistakes found in their research titles, and what are the students' perceptions regarding the process of translating their titles.

This research analyzes 105 Engineering students' titles data. Data regarding what and how many grammar mistakes found in their titles are obtained. Furthermore, by analyzing interview recordings to 5 representatives, the students' perceptions regarding the process of translating their titles are gained.

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### What are Grammar Mistakes Found in the Engineering Students' Research Titles?

To answer this question, a total of 105 research titles data from students majoring in Engineering were analyzed. From 105 titles, there are 93 titles with grammar mistakes, 4 titles are not translated into English, and 8 others are considered to have been translated well. This means that 88.57% of Engineering students' research titles (English version) have problems with the use of grammar. The results are as follows.

**Table 1. Types and number of grammar mistakes in the research titles**

Grammar Mistakes	Number of titles
Excessive use of definite article	69
Improper use of prepositions	22
Improper phrases	33

From 105 research titles, there are grammatical errors consisting of excessive use of definite articles in 69 titles, improper use of prepositions in 22 titles, and improper phrases in 33 titles.

#### 1. Excessive Use of Definite Article

The excessive use of definite articles makes the titles seem less interesting and not concise. Tullu (2019) stated that being concise is one of the keys in writing research titles to make it pleasant to read. A title should be presented concisely and not use many articles. Wallwork (2012) stated that definite article uses are normally reduced or even deleted in writing titles. Wallwork and Southern (2020) stated especially in writing titles, ensuring the

title as concise as possible is important, they suggested to delete unnecessary words including the definite article.

This research found inappropriate use of “the” in the Engineering students’ research titles. The excessive use of “the” found in 69 titles, here are the examples:

“The Mental Workload Analysis of the Embroidery Department Employees Using the Nasa-TLX Method at PT XYZ Cimareme”

**Figure 1. Excessive use of definite article in title 1**

The definite articles are used before the name of analysis, unit, and method. Another example shows that it is used before the name of a line/unit.

“Analysis of the Implementation of Line Balancing Using the Ranked Position Weight (RPW) Method in the Cardiac Line Sewing Process at PT. XYZ”

**Figure 2. Excessive use of definite article in title 2**

Another one shows that “the” is used before the name of the company/place.

“Work Accident Risk Analysis Using the HIRARC Method in the Tune-up Process at the PD SJ”

**Figure 3. Excessive use of definite article in title 3**

No research has been found discussing the excessive use of definite articles in English research titles. However, if we look at the opinions in review and books from (Tullu, 2019; Wallwork 2012; Wallwork & Southern, 2020), we may conclude that most of the titles in this research do not pay attention to grammar rules and title conciseness.

## **2. Improper Use of Prepositions**

Improper use of prepositions found in 22 titles to refer to words related to divisions/units and places. In this research, the improper use of prepositions usually lies in pointing name of places, such as,

“The Safety and Health Risk Analysis of the Gear Lifting and Carrying Concrete Pipes in the XYZ PT via HIRARC Methods”

**Figure 4. Improper use of preposition before name of company (1)**

It is “in” instead of “at” placed before the company name. It is also the same as the following example,

“OHS Risk Analysis Using the HIRARC Method in Tofu Industry PD Manunggal”

**Figure 5. Improper use of preposition before name of company (2)**

The improper preposition also lies in this following example context,

“Analysis of Job Safety Risk in Electric ARC Furnace Machine Operators Using the HIRARC Method (..) PT KC”

**Figure 6. Improper use of preposition before noun and none before company name**

Supposedly, the use of “in” is applied to the name of unit/division, but in the context of the title above, the noun “operators” shows that it is not proper to use “in”. It is more suitable for using the word “of”. Then, before the company name, the student did not add the appropriate preposition such as “at”.

They made mistakes in selecting and placing prepositions as Nachlisa (2021) revealed that many language learners make mistakes in using prepositions (selection errors) in students’ writing works. Liong (2023) also mentioned the use of improper prepositions as one of the grammar mistakes in writing research titles.

Not only improper prepositions, the titles also contain some other mistakes like the use of definite articles and improper phrase arrangement.

### **3. Improper Phrases**

Improper phrases found in 33 titles that refer to words related to the name of method, divisions/units and places.

Here are the examples of the improper phrases in this research. For instance, they put the word “Method” in the wrong place.

“C6232A Lathe Maintenance Analysis with Using the Reliability Centered Method Maintenance (RCM) at PT. AIT”

**Figure 7. Word misplacement in a noun phrase**

It should be “Reliability Centered Maintenance (RCM) Method”. In another example, there is a mistake for not adding “-s” in a plural noun.

“Analysis of the Causes of Rework in the RR AXLE Beam Welding Process with FMEA and FTA Method (Case Study at PT. XYZ)”

**Figure 8. Plural nouns mistake**

It should be “FMEA and PTA Methods” because the methods are two. It was also found that the mistakes are on an abbreviation that does not match and the wrong words placement in the method name.

“Analysis of Occupational Health and Safety (K3) in the Quality Control Department by Using Hazard Identification Risk Assessment and Risk Method Control (HIRARC)”

**Figure 9. Mistakes in writing an abbreviation and word-misplacement**

The abbreviation of “(K3)” should be changed with “(OHS)”, and the name of the method should be “Hazard Identification Risk Assessment and Risk Control (HIRARC) Method” instead of placing the word “Method” between “Risk” and “Control” words.

“The Designer of Equipment for Transporting the Harvest of White Mustard Farmers in Majalengka District Uses the Rapid Upper Limb Assessment (RULA) Method Approach”

**Figure 10. Noun errors**

In another example, the word “Designer” should be “Design”, the word “Uses” to be “Using”, and there is also ambiguity for choosing either “Method” or “Approach” for “Rapid Upper Limb Assessment (RULA)”.

“Analysis of Work Accident Risk by Methods Hazard and Operability (HAZOP) at UPT PKB DBDT”

**Figure 11. Word-misplacement and singular noun mistake**

The word “by” is better to be “using” and there are also mistakes in a word-misplacement and adding “-s” after the word “Method” for a single method. It should be “Using Hazard and Operability (HAZOP) Method”

The ability to arrange phrases is one of the important things in the translation process. This is one aspect that is recommended to be studied more seriously in the translation process (Panjaitan, Sipayung, Damanik, & Tampubolon, 2023). In writing noun phrases, several errors are often encountered in word placement. As what was found in another research, there were



three grammatical errors in writing research titles, those are word choice, placement of adjectives that should come before nouns, and use of prepositions (Liong, 2023). Placing adjectives after nouns is influenced by our language culture to place them like that.

Many of the Engineering students in this research misplaced words, they were wrong in adding suffixes, abbreviation, and seemed to be confused with the use of verbs and nouns, they did not pay attention to their English version titles.

### **What are the Students' Perceptions Regarding the Process of Translating Their Titles?**

After conducting interviews with 5 representatives, it was found about their perceptions regarding their feelings when they started trying to translate their titles and their responses regarding their English grammar mastery. Some structured interview questions were asked, and the interviews were conducted in a relaxed manner by using the most comfortable language, Bahasa Indonesia. The interview summary is in this following table:

**Table 2. Interview Summary**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Summary</b>
How did you write the title of your research in English? What obstacles did you experience when translating the title? How did you feel about it?	Feeling worry, because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Feeling not confident of their English mastery, esp. in connecting words and choosing appropriate words;</li> <li>●Afraid of the inappropriate meaning.</li> </ul>
Did you use a translation machine?	Yes, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Everyone used Google translate as a translation medium.</li> <li>●Some of them also used Chat GPT because of its popularity.</li> </ul>
Did you feel worried when collecting/reporting your research titles (English version) that you had made by the assistance of the translation machine?	There were concerned about, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●Feeling worried that the translation is still not right.</li> <li>●Feeling worried that many research readers will misinterpret their titles.</li> </ul> There was no worry because, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●They thought that the translation results from Google Translate are trustworthy.</li> <li>●They thought that their titles would not be checked.</li> </ul>
How do you think English is? Do you understand the use of English grammar?	They assumed that, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>●They are not very proficient in using grammar in English.</li> <li>●They usually use common words used by many people now, like English Jaksel</li> <li>●They know some English grammar, but they still hesitate to apply them.</li> <li>●Remember and understand the use of grammar only when studying it in English class, but forget it after leaving the class.</li> </ul>

From the interview summary, the reasons or factors causing errors in translating are in the aspect of mastering grammar. They perceived that they are not very good at using English grammar, they know some grammar but they hesitate to apply it. They understood their grammar lessons in class, but they did not study them again so they forgot how to apply proper grammar. It shows a lack of motivation in learning grammar.

It also causes them to be afraid to translate their title which leads them to think and rely on the use of machine translation. However, unfortunately, they used it without sorting words, considering grammar use, and the meaning of the translation results.

Lack of grammar mastery is a common reason for English language learners, it often causes a lack of confidence in carrying out the language translation process. Therefore, they rely more on the use of machine translation. As found by Setiawan and Axelina (2023), many students experience high dependency on Google Translate in translating their writing.

The use of translation machines such as Google Translate and ChatGPT are also something considered normal in carrying out the translation process from Indonesian to English. So simple and quick to produce translations (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017). However, there are still several errors found in the translation results, and it requires knowledge to at least sort out the words and grammar according to the context and actual meaning. As expressed by some researchers, they stated that users may consider the machine a quick dictionary to increase vocabulary, and they suggested double-checking the translation results for getting good translations (Tumbal, Liando, & Olii, 2021; Yanti & Meka, 2019).

In some research, Chat GPT is also known as a translation medium with ease, speed, and its translation results maintaining its context and meaning (Baskara, 2023; Giglio & Costa, 2023; Roza & Zulhirawati, 2023). Yet in this research, the translation results from that platform could not maintain the meaning and grammatical errors were still found.

Some of the students admitted that they were worried after submitting their English titles. They were worried that the title that had been translated through a GT and ChatGPT did not fit the context they wanted. They were concerned about their readers' misunderstandings arising from these errors. However, there were students who felt that the translated title was already good and met their context expectation because they believed and thought that the translation machines are made to translate.

Double checking is needed as an important step to confirm the suitability of the meaning. However, their lack of grammar mastery makes this unsupportable. Therefore, grammar

learning needs to be developed, let them practice using appropriate grammar such as how to use articles, prepositions, and noun phrases properly (Putri, 2021; Wirantaka & Fijanah, 2021). It may train their translation skills because students can easily confirm the translation results obtained from machine translation to the desired or appropriate meaning and context.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

88.57% of Engineering students' research titles (in English version) have problems with the grammar use. Mistakes in using grammar are caused by the state of being too dependent on using translation machines such as Google Translate and Chat GPT without the process of sorting words, considering grammar use, and considering the meaning of the translation results. From the students' perception, the dependency is due to a lack of motivation to double-check the translation results due to lack of grammar mastery, even though they felt worried about the results of their title translations. Therefore, we need to improve our motivation to learn more how to apply proper grammar. We need to put more attention and effort into preparing an understanding of the use of good grammar in translating. It can encourage us to correct some errors found in the machine translation-generated translation results.

This research only discusses grammar mistakes found in Engineering research titles. It would be better to discuss other aspects that may be related to this in the future research.

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