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Analysis of Writing Errors on the Abstracts Submitted for the Research Conferences Hosted by Arsi, Jimma and Wellega Universities

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to analyze writing errors on the abstracts submitted for the research conferences hosted by Arsi, Jimma and Wellega Universities. The study used qualitative research method and case study design. The data collection tools were document review and interview. The study used purposive and availability sampling techniques. Findings revealed the common writing errors were grammar, subject-verb-agreement, spacing and mechanics (spelling, capitalization and punctuation). The basic causes for the errors were lack of knowledge of English, lack of attention given to the language and lack of practice of editing own writings. The strategies to mitigate writing errors were through practice of proofreading and editing of own writings before submission. The data from table 5 showed as the highest writing errors were made on grammar (31.8%), spacing (28.2%), subject-verb-agreement (27.3%), spelling (26.4%), capitalization (6.4%) and punctuation (4.5%) respectively. Thus, the study recommends the researchers/authors of the abstracts to deeply scrutinize their English language on the above identified errors, give due attention to the rules and grammar of the language and develop the practice of editing own works before submission. Likewise, it is better to work together with colleagues who are better in English language, have the practice of editing own works and ready to admit comments and feedbacks given to learn from the errors committed. In addition, Ethiopian universities should do on their lecturers/researchers English language competencies to fill their language skill gaps via short term training.

Keywords: Abstracts; editing; mechanical mistakes; universities; writings

1. Introduction

English is used as an international language and many countries use as medium of instruction in their schools, colleges and universities (Hornby, 2011). Writing is considered as the "most

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difficult of the language abilities to acquire" (Alen and Coder cited in Lasaten (2014).) for writing in English requires mastering the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Among the academic works written in English, an abstract is a crucial component that appears in a separate listing to inform a reader succinctly what the paper was about, why and how the research was conducted and what conclusions might be drawn. In addition, it also summarizes the whole research in one page, found at the beginning of the research paper and thus, seen as the first element of a paper that researchers read to discover the overview of the rest of the research. Thus, abstracts are brief summaries of the whole paper in which 'everything of relevance to potential readers should be found' (Derntel, 2014).

Scholars such as (Gambescia, 2013) states abstracts for academic purposes are required to present at scientific conference following a call for paper and acceptance of paper based on the guideline. Scholars argued that though errors commonly occur in writings, "academic writings produced even by foreign language learners almost inevitably contain errors of various types" (Bros, 2017). These errors are classified as lexical (misspelling), mechanical errors (punctuation & capitalization) and grammatical error such as inappropriate verb tense (Garner, 2017). Thus, in order to be free from errors in writing, abstracts must be well-written in terms of the overall structure and language conventions. To this end, there are 12 minimum requirements for writing abstracts that consist of tenses, articles, agreements or concords, gerunds, prepositions, suffixation, redundancy, spelling and punctuations. However, the focus of this study is on grammar, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, preposition, subject-verb-agreement and spacing.

When seen in details, tenses are related to time of utterance (Uusikski, 2016) whereas an agreement is the correspondence of a verb with its subject in person, number and gender (Norduist, 2017). According to a scholarly work of (Bram et al, 2016), spelling and punctuations are the two major points in which writers should mind in writing abstracts. In comparison with spelling, capitalizations are used to begin in capital letter the names of a person, town or a country (Brandes, 2012). A study conducted by (Bram et al, 2016) states writing an abstract requires writers to mind not only the spelling but also the punctuation in which they need to put a full stop at the end of every statement and a question mark at the end of every question.

Studies conducted by Sermon (2017) on abstracts showed that the most frequent errors committed by second-year English major EFL students of Thailand were punctuation, articles, subject-verb agreement, spelling, and capitalization.

When the causes of errors are considered,(Richards and Renandya, 2003) categorized them as *inter-language error* (the interaction between the target language and learners' mother tongue) and *intra-language error* (error occurring from faulty comprehension of distinction in the target language). Previous studies by (Pochakorn, 2017) also found the major sources of errors as inter- intra – lingual interferences, limited knowledge of English grammar and carelessness of writers.

However, the above studies did not identify errors on spacing and the causes such as lack of due attention given to the language and to academic writing. Likewise, there were no studies that came up with mitigating strategies towards writing errors of abstracts. Thus, the reason behind conducting this study was to identify, describe, categorize and analyze errors of both domestic and international researchers who submitted their abstracts for the purpose of participation on the national and international research conferences hosted by Arsi, Jimma and Wellega Universities (2016- 2019).

2. Statements of the Problem

Writing is a complex process for it is one of the productive skills that take more time and effort from writers to master in the professional and academic world. In line with this, when teaching the skills, writing is put at the end (arranged as listening, speaking, reading and writing) for it is thought to be highly complex and difficult to master even for natives (Richards and Renandya, 2003). According to (Al-Jarf, 2010), the errors that writers usually make are due to negligence of basic writing mechanics and grammatical rules and the causes were lack of following rules of grammar, tense, spelling, rules of punctuation and capitalization. Voni (2018) conducted study on "An Error Analysis on Undergraduate Thesis Abstracts' of English Language Education Students of Sanata Dharma University in the years 2014-2017" came across the findings that comprised omission of errors (35.9%), misformation (21.5%), addition (18.3%), punctuation errors (11.9%), and spelling (9.3%). However, the above findings did not come up with specific areas of grammar, subject-verb-agreement, capitalization and spacing and the causes for the errors and mitigating strategies.

Local studies on the topics under study were carried out by Alamrew (2005) indicated that writing is either not covered at all or not taught effectively on account of the less importance that writers give to writing than they give to other language skills and grammar. Tekle et al (2011) indicated that due to teachers' failure to put their beliefs about the nature of writing, it is given little attention and taught inappropriately.

From the experiences and observations, academic writing errors were multifaceted that could initiate any concerned body to conduct a study and so did I to analyze writing errors on the abstracts submitted for national and international research conferences hosted by the three selected universities in Ethiopia. To this end, the study was guided by the following research questions.

3. Research Questions

1. What are the writing errors on the abstracts submitted for research conferences in the selected universities?

2. What are the basic causes for the writing errors on the abstracts submitted for research conferences in the selected universities?

3. What are the strategies to mitigate the writing errors on the abstracts submitted for research conferences in the selected universities?

4. Objectives of the Study

4.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to analyze writing errors on the abstracts submitted for the research conferences hosted by Arsi, Jimma and Wellega Universities.

4.1.1. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were**:**

1. To examine writing errors on the abstracts submitted for research conferences in the selected universities

2. To identify the basic causes for the writing errors on the abstracts submitted for research conferences in the selected universities

3. To forward strategies to mitigate the writing errors on the abstracts submitted for research conferences in the selected universities.

5. Research Design

Case study design was employed in this study. As (Creswell, 2007) puts it, case study is a type of qualitative research design through which the researcher examines thoroughly one or several cases.

6. Research Method

The study used qualitative research method for it is a sort of empirical investigation of using attributes that are explained through textual information rather than numerical (Creswell, 2009).

7. Sampling Techniques

Purposive and availability sampling techniques were used in which research and publication directorates were selected by purposive sampling technique whereas some researchers in which their mobile numbers are available on their abstracts were selected via availability sampling technique.

Table 3.1: Profiles of the Participants

| No. | Names of Universities | Years | No of Abstracts | Educational Qualifications | | | | | | |
				Prof.	Asso. Prof.	Asst. Prof.	Phd	Phdc	MA	Total
1	Arsi	2016	48	1	4	7	18	1	89	120
		2017	41	-	2	4	10	-	88	104
		2018	24	1	1	3	10	5	12	32
		2019	13	-	-	3	6	2	7	18
2	Jimma and Wellega	2018	42	-	-	-	18	7	24	49
3	Jimma	2019	33	4	-	-	13	2	14	33
	Total		201	6	7	17	75	17	234	**356**

Sources: Abstract Survey, 2021

8. Instruments of Data Collection

Document review/analysis and interview were used to collect the data. To this end, books of abstracts submitted for both national and international research conferences from the years 2016-2019 were collected; errors were identified, categorized and analyzed in tables, percentages and frequencies.

9. Results and Discussions

The data obtained in this study were analyzed in accordance with Surface Strategy Taxonomy suggested by (Dulay et al, 1982). This taxonomy categorizes writing errors into four as omission, addition, misformation and misordering errors. With this in mind, a total of 201 abstracts written by 356 researchers both from in and outside the country that participated on the research conferences hosted by the selected three universities were analyzed from the abstracts collected to identify the writing errors. In addition, interviews were carried out with the purposively selected three universities research and publication directorates and with

some available researchers to crosscheck their level of English language and causes of their writing errors on the abstracts submitted for the conferences.

Accordingly, when the research conference hosted by Arsi University in 2016 was reviewed, 48 abstracts were submitted by 120 researchers out of which there were 1 Professor, 4 Associate professors, 7 Assistant professors, 18 PhD holders, 1PhD candidate and 89 MA holders were participated. In 2017, 41 abstracts were submitted by 104 researchers out of which there were 2 Associate professors, 4 Assistant professors, 8 PhD, 2 MD, and 88 MA holders were participated. In 2018, 24 abstracts were submitted by 32 researchers out of which 1 Professor, 1 Associate professor, 3 Assistant professors, 10 PhD, 5 PhD candidates and 12 MA holders. In 2019, 33 abstracts were submitted by 33 researchers out of which there were 4 Professors, 13 PhD, 2 PhD candidates and 14 MA holders.

When the research conferences hosted by Jimma and Wellega Universities in 2018 were reviewed, in 2016, 48 abstracts were submitted by 120 researchers out of which there were 1 Professor, 4 Associate professors, 7 Assistant professors, 18 PhD holders, 1PhD candidate and 89 MA holders.

When the research conference hosted by Jimma University in 2019 was reviewed, 48 abstracts were submitted by 120 researchers out of which there were 1 Professor, 4 Associate professors, 7 Assistant professors, 18 PhD holders, 1PhD candidate and 89 MA holders. While analyzing the abstracts, the four surface taxonomy strategies proposed by Dulay et al (1982) that comprise addition, omission, and misformation and misordering were followed. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study, addition & omission were used as per the errors reviewed.

Table 4.1: Writing Errors of Grammar

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2016	The data comprise of	The data comprise –
2		It is enable	It is enabling
3		Thereby realize	Thereby realizing
4		If it's serve	If it's serving
5		It attribute	It attributes
6		It governing	It is governing

As can be seen from table 4.1, the writers/researchers of abstracts made the following grammatical errors of writing. The writing error of grammar was using a preposition 'of' for the verb 'comprise' in which the verb 'comprise' does not take any preposition. The other writing errors were the verbs (enable and serve) after 'is' were not followed by 'ing' form

and the verb after 'thereby' was not followed by 'ing' form. Thus, the rule should be 'it + is + v + ing' and 'thereby + v + ing'. The other writing error was that a singular subject 'it' did not add verb 's' in its simple present tense and the omission of the verb 'is' in the formation of 'ing'.

Table 4.2: Subject-Verb-Agreement

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2016	Males is	Males are
2		Policy focus	Policy focuses
3		Data is/was	Data are/were
4		These factors is	These factors are
5		Data was (10x)	Data were
6		Among two subjects	Between two subjects
7		Children was	Children were
8		Male were	Male was
9		Institutions provides	Institutions provide

As can be seen from table 4.2, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of subject-verb-agreement. The writing errors were the use of a singular verb 'is' for plural subjects/words 'males, data, factors, children, institutions' and a singular subject 'policy' did not add 'v-es' in its simple present tense formation. Especially, the word 'data' should always take plural verb 'are/were'. The other writing errors were the use of plural verb 'were' for a singular subject 'male' and the use of 'among' for two subjects. However, 'among' is used for more than two subjects whereas 'between' is used only for two things/subjects.

Table 4.3: Spacing

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2016	Rangelands	Range lands
2		Rawmilk	Raw milk
3		Where as	Whereas
4		Basedon,	Based on,
5		Educationbut	Education but
6		Andteacher	And teacher
7		Infectedpatientsofage15years	Infected patients of age 15 years
8		Squareandcorrelation	Square and correlation
9		Staff s	Staffs
10		Kimokebelo	KimoKebelo

As can be seen from table 4.3, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spacing. The writing errors were lack of giving a space for two or more different words and errors of writing a word without making a regular writing space such as (whereas and staffs).

Table 4.4: Capitalization

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2016	ethiopia(20x)	Ethiopia
2		borena	Borena
3		lake hawassa	Lake Hawassa
4		ambo	Ambo
5		yabello	Yabello
6		oromia	Oromia
7		Kimokebelo	KimoKebelo

As can be seen from table 4.4, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of capitalization. The writing errors were writing the first letter/s of the names of a country (ethiopia), names of zones (borena, ambo, yabello), region (oromia), lake, town/city and names of persons in a small letter/s. Of all capitalization errors, the first letter in the name 'ethiopia' was written 20 times in a small letter. However, the rule generally states that all the first letters of proper names should be written in a capital letter.

Table 4.5: Spelling

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2016	Police analysis	Policy analysis
2		Deference between the two	Difference between the two
3		Great roll	Great role
4		Flied researcher	Field researcher
5		Associat professor	Associate professor
6		In terms – size	In terms of size
7		Ethiopia'a	Ethiopia

As can be seen from table 4.5, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spelling. The common errors were unable to distinguish the difference between two different words and their meaning (police vs policy, deference vs difference), omission and addition (role vs roll, associate, in terms, Ethiopia'a).

Table 4.6: Punctuation

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2016	HawasaAdamaBishoftu	Hawasa, Adama, Bishoftu
2		Sept	Sept.
3		Ethiopia'a	Ethiopia

As can be seen from table 4.6, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of punctuation. The common errors were unable to separate consecutive names by a comma. The other writing error was using unknown contraction (Sept) without a full stop at the end

and error of spelling the name of the country (Ethiopia'a). As a rule, contractions should use a full stop at the end of a contracted word (Sept.).

Table 4.7: Grammar

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2017	Comprised of	Comprised –
2		The current study was using	The current study is using
3		The study was conducted October	The study was conducted on October
4		They should used	They should use
5		This imply	This implies

As can be seen from table 4.7, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of grammar. The common error was using a preposition 'of' for the verb 'comprise' in which the verb 'comprise' does not take any preposition. The other errors were unable to use proper tense for the present continuous tense (the current study is using) and unable to use a proper proposition 'on' for months of the year.

The other two grammatical errors were using past or past participle for modal auxiliary verbs and using root verb (v-1) for singular subject 'this'. However, the rules are all modal auxiliary verbs + v-1 and singular subjects (he, she, it +v-s, v-es and v-ies) depending on the verb types.

Table 4.8: Subject-Verb-Agreement

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2017	Data was (9x)	Data were
2		Drivers who uses	Drivers who use
3		Abe and Guta is	Abe and Guta are
4		Program which involve	Program which involves
5		The researchers aims	The researchers aim

As can be seen from table 4.8, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of subject-verb-agreement. The common errors were using a singular verb for plural subjects and unable to use v-s for singular subject (program).

Table 4.9: Spacing

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2017	AdemKedi,	AdemKedi,
2		Thewheat	The wheat
3		3students	3 students
4		EphremGuta	EphremGuta

As can be seen from table 4.9, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spacing. The common errors were writing the first and last names of persons (AdemKedi, EphremGuta) without giving a space or gap in the writing and writing two different words or subjects (Thewheat, 3students) without spacing.

Table 4.10: Spelling

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2017	Arsii	Arsi
2		Jimmaa	Jimma
3		College of Allied Sciences	College of Applied Sciences
4		Datta(5x)	Data
5		Nekmte	Nekemte

As can be seen from table 4.10, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spelling. The common errors were addition (Arsii-**i**, Jimmaa-**a**, Datta-**t,** Allied-**l**) and omission (Allied-**pp**, Nekmte-**e**) of letters from words.

Table 4.11: Grammar

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2018	Should be balance	Should be balanced
2		Were began	Were begun
3		This is largely depends on	This is largely depending on
4		Did not met	Did not meet
5		The study conclude that	The study concludes that

As can be seen from table 4.11, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of grammar. The common errors were using verb to 'be' without past participle or v-3 and unable to make v-3 after 'were'. The other writing errors were not using 'ing' form of the verb after 'is' and not using v-1(root verb) after the past verb 'did' and not using v-s for a singular subject (the study). The rules should be (be + v-3, is + ing, were + v-3/ing, did + v-1, singular subject + v-s, v-es, v-ies).

Table 4.12: Subject-Verb-Agreement

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2016	Data was (7x)	Data were
2		Offenders who abuses	Offenders who abuse
3		Results reveals	Results reveal
4		I am assistant professors	I am assistant professor

As can be seen from table 4.12, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spacing. The common errors were using singular verb for plural subjects (data was, offenders

who abuses, results reveals) and addition of 's' to plural subjects (offenders, results). Finally, using/addition of 's' for singular subject (I-1ˢᵗ person singular).

Table 4.13: Spacing

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2018	Where as	Whereas
2		Divided in to	Divided into
3		ZerihunAyan	ZerihunAyan

As can be seen from table 4.13, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spacing. The common errors were unable to narrow the gap between words and making one word (into) to become two words (in to) and making of two words (first and last names of a person) to become a single word (ZerihunAyan).

Table 4.14: Spelling

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2018	Yshiwork	Yeshiwork
2		Nekmte	Nekemte
3		Arsi University Core valves	Arsi University core values
4		Those submitted their abstracts	Those who submitted their abstracts
5		Thu	Thus
6		All ther three points	All the three points/ all their three points
7		Ademic rank	Academic rank
8		Should be balabce	Should be balanced
9		Mohamodawel	Mohammedawel/Mohamedawel/Muhammedawel

As can be seen from table 4.14, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spelling. The common errors were omission of letters (Yshiwork-**e**, Nekmte-**e**, Thu-**s**, Ademic-**ca**, those submitted their abstracts-**who**, Mohamodawel-**me**) and addition (Mohamodawel-**o**, All ther-**r**) of letters to make the words meaningless. The other writing error was writing a meaningless word 'balabce' on their abstracts.

Table 4.15: Grammar

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2019	This paper based on	This paper is/was based on
2		This must be address	This must be addressed

As can be seen from table 4.15, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of grammar. The two writing errors were unable to use the linking verb 'is/was' and lack of using 'be + v-3'.

Table 4.16: Subject-Verb-Agreement

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2016	The population of the study was elders, abbagada…	The populations of the study were elders, abbagada…
2		Data is (2x)	Data are
3		Centre were	Centre was
4		Female constitute	Female constitutes

As can be seen from table 4.16, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of subject-verb-agreement. The common errors were using singular verb (was, is) for plural subjects (elders, abbagada, data) and using plural verb (were) for singular subject (centre) and unable to add v-s (constitute) to singular subject (female).

Table 4.17: Spacing

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2019	Rangelands	Range lands
2		Rawmilk	Raw milk
3		Where as	Whereas
4		Basedon,	Based on
5		Educationbut	Education but
6		Andteacher	And teacher
7		Infectedpatientsofage15years	Infected patients of age 15 years
8		Squareandcorrelation	Square and correlation
9		Ofhigher	Of higher
10		Staff s	Staffs

As can be seen from table 4.17, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spacing. The writing errors were lack of making two or more different words to be separated and lack of writing one word as it is without spacing (whereas) and (staffs).

Table 4.18: Grammar

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2018 Jimma and Wellega	The institute extend their gratitude	The institutes extend their gratitude
2		Finding illustrate	Finding illustrates
3		Those nations who	Those nations that
4		That contributing	That is contributing
5		The later view is better than the …	The latter view is better than the former

6		Finding show	Finding shows
7		The paper argue	The paper argues
8		Thereby understood	Thereby understanding

As can be seen from table 4.18, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of grammar. The common grammatical errors identified were lack of using proper tense in the present and present continuous tense. That is, singular subject lacked to take 'v-s' and present continuous tense lacked to take linking verb 'is + v + ing' in its continuous formation. The other errors were using relative clause 'who' for the 'nations' than using 'that or which'. The last grammatical errors were lack of differentiating between 'later' and 'latter' and lack of using 'ing' after 'thereby'.

That is, 'later' refers to time (coming late) whereas 'latter' refers to order (the latter means the second or the next). With regard to 'thereby', the rule is 'thereby +v-ing'.

Table 4.19: Subject-Verb-Agreement

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2018	In this two day	In these two days
2		Political culture that rest	Political culture that rests
3		The conclusion and finding is	The conclusion and finding are

As can be seen from table 4.19, the major subject-verb-agreement writing errors comprised that the subject 'this', the quantifier 'two' and complement 'day' did not agree in number and person. Thus, the correct agreement is 'in these two days'. The other errors were not using 'v-s' for singular subject (political culture that rests) and using a singular verb for plural subjects (the conclusion & finding is). However, the rule should be using singular verb for singular subject and using plural verb for plural subjects.

Table 4.20: Spelling

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2019	AfaanOromooo (3x)	Afan Oromo
2		Grate number	Great number
3		Ecsasy	Meaningless but seems to say 'Easy'

As can be seen from table 4.20, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spelling. The common writing spelling errors were addition of letters and using wrong spelling in the writing. To be more specific and clear, the errors of the above three 'o' were made by two Ethiopians that teach at European and USA universities that took part on the international conference. For the sake of surprising, the word 'Oromooo' was written three times in the identified abstract. The other exceptional error was the writing of meaningless word '*Ecsasy*'. But it seems as it stands to refer to 'Easy'.

Table 4.21: Punctuation

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2019	HawasaAdamaBishoftu	Hawasa, Adama, Bishoftu
2		Sept	Sept.

As can be seen from table 4.21, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of punctuation. The common punctuation errors were writing consecutive names without separating by a comma and not using comma for the contraction of months in the writing. However, consecutive names should be separated by a comma and contractions of months and others should use a full stop after the contracted word.

Table 4.22: Grammar

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2019 Jimma	He select	He selects
2		He come up with	He comes up with
3		It play	It plays
4		Generation that dispose	Generation that disposes
5		Simulation that create	Simulation that creates
6		Curriculum create	Curriculum creates
7		Could established	Could establish
8		This in turn become	This in turn becomes
9		It has produce	It has produced

As can be seen from table 4.22, the writers/researchers made the following writing grammatical errors. The common errors were unable to follow the rules of grammar (not to

use 'v-s, es, ies' for the 3rd person singular (it plays), modal auxiliary + v-1 (could establish), verb to have/has/had + v-3/past participle (it has produced) in their formation.

Table 4.23: Subject-Verb-Agreement

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1		This research have	This research has
2		People has	People have
3		Priority have to	Priority has to
4		Data was(2x)	Data were
5		133 years is	133 years are

As can be seen from table 4.23, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of subject-verb-agreement. The common errors were using plural verb for singular subject and vice-versa. Thus, proper subject-verb-agreements (using singular verb for singular subject) and (using plural verbs for plural subjects) both in person, number and gender should be used.

Table 4.24: Spelling

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2019	One the MaccaTulama	On the MaccaTulama
2		Gadaaa (2x)	Gada
3		A ful	A full
4		Accoprding	According

As can be seen from table 4.24, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spelling. The common errors were addition (instead of 'on', 'e' was added and becomes 'one' and two 'a's were added to 'Gada', 'p' was added to the word 'according' and made it meaningless). The other error was omission of a letter 'l' from the word 'full'.

Table 4.25: Spacing

No.	Year	Items with Mistakes	Items with Corrections
1	2019	Divided In to	Divided into
2		Pave away for	Pave away for
3		AfaanOromooo	Afan Oromo

As can be seen from table 4.25, the writers/researchers made the following writing errors of spacing. The common errors were unable to narrow the gap between words and making one word (into) to become two words (in to) and making two words (pave a way) to become a single word (pave away).

The other spacing error in writing was the issue of two popular words 'AfaanOromooo' even with three vowels. Thus, the correct one should be 'Afan Oromo'.

Table 5: Summaries of Writing Errors of Abstracts Submitted for the Research Conferences

Types of Writing Errors											
Grammar		Spacing		Subject-verb agreement		Spelling		Capitalization		Punctuation	
Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
35	31.8%	31	28.2%	30	27.3%	29	26.4%	7	6.4%	5	4.5%

As can be seen from table 5, the most frequent types of writing errors were grammar (31.8%), spacing (28.2%), subject-verb-agreement (27.3%), spelling (26.4), capitalization (6.4%) and punctuation (4.5%) respectively.

10. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to analyze writing errors that were found on the abstracts that were submitted by both domestic and international researchers on the national and international research conferences hosted by Arsi, Jimma and Wellega universities in the years 2016-2019. Writing is the most demanding area of language in which researchers usually have enough time to think and produce sentences in writing. Good writing usually include grammar and mechanics in which mastering these rules and conventions makes the writing easier to be understood by the readers. Nevertheless, it is quite common to make errors while learning a foreign language for it is very hard to eliminate errors in the target language without using the language. This is due to the fact that writing error analysis has emerged as a flourishing area in applied linguistics. From the findings of this study, researchers both from in and outside made errors of both grammatical and technical errors on their abstracts they submitted for the participation on both national and international research conferences. The identified writing errors were prepositions, verb to be, singular/plural forms, tenses, misspelling, capitalization, punctuation and spacing that could be categorized as addition and omission of writing errors. Thus, writers should focus on grammar, spacing,

subject-verb-agreement, spelling, capitalization and punctuation of the writings that affect meaning and communication of the language. From these, it could be concluded that the writing errors made the works of the researchers to be under big question mark in linguistic competence and knowledge of English language in their academic writings.

The basic causes for the occurrence of the writing errors were the difficulty and complexity of English language, lack of following Basic English language grammar and its rules and lack of attention given to the language and their academic work. Thus, it could be concluded that the problem of considering English as a difficult and complex subject and not following its grammar and usage made many researchers not to give due attention to their academic writings in English. This in its turn paves an open space for the writing errors to be increased from time to time and from national conferences to international conferences.

As a strategy, writing does not come naturally but rather gained through continuous effort and practice. Thus, unless researchers employee viable mitigating strategies such as proofreading and editing their own writing works before submission to any research conference or before making public, the writing errors could affect their academic competence and writing in English in the academic world.

11. Recommendations

It is inevitable for foreign language learners to make errors and it is not a widely accepted rule to correct each error immediately whenever they are made. Error correction should be performed sensitively as learners shouldn't be offended and discouraged in writing. Therefore, it could be a good idea to let writers/researchers discover and correct their writing errors on their own and sometimes with peers. One of the main implications of this study was that the researchers writing in English as a foreign language should heavily focus on prepositions, verb "to be", spelling, singular/plural forms, word formation, tenses, capitalization, spacing, punctuation and subject-verb agreement as they were the most problematic areas of language listed under the four main categories given above.

The researchers/ both from inside and outside the country should practice writing strategies by focusing on editing their research works from drafting to finalizing. In so doing, their knowledge of English language in their academic writings could pave the way to proofread and edit their works before submission to any research conference or before making public. They should also develop the practice of peer-colleague reviewing and getting constructive feedbacks from one another before submission.

As far as the basic causes for the occurrence of the abstracts writing errors were concerned, the Ethiopian universities and ministry of education should assess the English language competencies (grammatical and technical rules) of the graduates who could serve as university lecturers and fill the identified gaps through short term training. In so doing, the tendency to minimize the writing errors from time to time would be promising.

It is also highly recommended that language teachers, academicians, researchers and writers should take the results of this study positively for future practices and improvements as one of the writing component and give more time to proofread and edit their drafts before submission. This way, they can figure out their errors better in which the more they practice, the fewer errors they will make.

For the peer blind reviewers, an abstract must be written in less than one page and must employ complete sentence, correct grammar and usage, conventional spelling, capitalization and punctuation and appropriate word choices. Thus, they should give due attention to academic writing errors on abstracts by considering as an important requirement. In doing so, researchers could vest their interest in writing well, and a stronger grasp of grammar, syntax and mechanics in their writing. To do so, some recent online applications which show the mistakes and errors on the text as soon as it is written can be used for this purpose.

Competing Interests
The author does not have conflict of interest.

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