

Omission Errors in Indonesian Students' Sentence Construction: A Semantic Agreement Analysis

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ABSTRACT

*This study investigates omission errors in Indonesian students' sentence constructions with a focus on semantic agreement. The purpose of the study is to identify and analyze how omission of linguistic elements affects grammaticality and sentence structure in academic writing. A qualitative descriptive method was employed, and the data were taken from students' written academic texts consisting of 69 ungrammatical sentences. The data were collected through documentation and analyzed using linguistic error analysis based on syntactic and semantic principles. The findings reveal two main categories of omission errors: omission of function words and omission of syntactic function elements. Omission of function words includes the absence of the complementizer *bahwa* and elements of correlative conjunctions such as *baik ... maupun ...*. Meanwhile, omission of syntactic elements involves the absence of subjects and the use of prepositional phrases in subject position. These errors indicate that students tend to prioritize semantic meaning over grammatical structure, resulting in sentences that are interpretable but structurally incomplete. The study highlights that omission errors are closely related to students' limited understanding of sentence structure and the transfer of spoken language patterns into academic writing. These findings suggest the need for explicit instruction on grammatical completeness and sentence structure in Indonesian academic writing.*

Keywords: Omission errors; sentence construction; semantic agreement; Indonesian academic writing; syntactic analysis.

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1. Introduction

Language plays a central role in academic writing as a medium for expressing ideas in a clear, precise, and structured manner. In this context, grammatical accuracy becomes an essential requirement, as it ensures that meaning is conveyed effectively and avoids ambiguity. In Indonesian academic writing, the relationship between syntax and semantics is particularly important, since sentence structure must align with meaning to achieve coherence and acceptability (Gallage & De Silva, 2024; Kyeongjae et al., 2025; Panggabean et al., 2025; Said et al., 2021).

However, in practice, students often produce sentences that are semantically interpretable but grammatically inaccurate. One of the most prominent issues found in students' writing is ungrammaticality caused by omission. According to Azizah et al., 2024 omission refers to the absence of required linguistic elements, such as function words or core syntactic components, which results in structurally incomplete sentences. Although the intended meaning may still be understood, the absence of these elements disrupts grammatical correctness and weakens the overall quality of academic writing.

Previous studies on students' language errors have generally focused on broad categories such as grammatical errors, syntactic errors, or general writing difficulties. However, fewer studies have specifically examined omission as a distinct pattern of ungrammaticality, particularly in relation to semantic agreement in Indonesian sentence construction. In Indonesian, grammaticality is not only determined by structural completeness but also by the appropriateness of meaning relations between sentence elements. Therefore, analyzing omission errors through the lens of semantic agreement provides a more comprehensive understanding of how meaning and structure interact in students' writing.

Omission errors in Indonesian commonly occur in both function words and syntactic elements. Function words, such as the complementizer *bahwa* and correlative conjunctions (e.g., *baik ... maupun ...*), play a crucial role in linking clauses and maintaining sentence cohesion. Their absence often results in incomplete or unbalanced constructions. In addition, omission at the syntactic level, particularly the absence of subjects or the incorrect use of prepositional phrases as subjects, reflects deeper structural issues in sentence formation. These patterns suggest that students may rely on informal or spoken language conventions, where such elements are frequently omitted, and transfer them into formal academic writing.

Understanding these omission patterns is important not only from a linguistic perspective but also from a pedagogical standpoint. By identifying how and why such errors occur, educators can develop more effective strategies to improve students' grammatical competence, particularly in academic writing contexts. Furthermore, focusing on omission allows for a more targeted analysis compared to broader error categories, making it possible to highlight specific areas that require instructional attention.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the ungrammaticality of students' sentence constructions with a specific focus on omission patterns. The study examines how omission occurs in function words and syntactic elements and how these omissions affect the grammaticality and semantic coherence of sentences. By doing so, this research is expected to contribute to the development of more precise linguistic analysis and more effective teaching approaches in Indonesian academic writing.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Grammaticality and Sentence Construction

Grammaticality is a fundamental aspect of language that determines whether a sentence is acceptable according to the rules of a particular language system. In Indonesian, grammaticality is not only defined by syntactic correctness but also by the appropriate relationship between sentence elements and their semantic roles. Moeliono et al. (2017) emphasize that a grammatically correct sentence must show a clear alignment between structure and meaning, ensuring coherence and interpretability. Therefore, sentence construction errors occur when this alignment is disrupted, leading to ungrammatical forms even if the intended meaning is still understandable.

2.2. Error Analysis in Second Language and Academic Writing

Error analysis has been widely used to investigate learners' language production. According to Corder (1967), errors are significant indicators of learners' language development and provide insight into their interlanguage system. In academic writing, errors often appear in the form of omission, addition, substitution, and misordering (Alsoweed et al., 2025; Mochammad et al., 2025; Swandayani et al., 2026). Among these, omission errors are frequently found because learners tend to simplify sentence structures by excluding certain grammatical elements that are considered less essential for meaning transmission (Andini et al., 2026; Youngsun et al., 2024).

Dulay et al. (1982) further categorize omission as one of the most common error types in second language acquisition. They argue that learners often omit function words and grammatical morphemes, especially when these elements do not carry strong semantic weight. This tendency reflects a developmental stage in which learners prioritize meaning over form.

2.3. Omission Errors in Sentence Structure

Omission errors refer to the absence of necessary linguistic elements in a sentence, such as function words, subjects, verbs, or grammatical markers. In Indonesian grammar, function words such as the complementizer *bahwa* and correlative conjunctions (*baik ... maupun ...*) play an important role in connecting clauses and maintaining sentence cohesion. The absence of these elements may result in structurally incomplete sentences, even though the meaning remains partially understandable.

In addition, syntactic omission, particularly the absence of subjects, is a significant issue in sentence construction (Haegeman, 2019; Kaharuddin et al., 2025; Sachiya et al., 2025). A complete sentence in Indonesian requires a subject and predicate structure (Anisah, 2025; Ko et al., 2025; Latif et al., 2024). However, learners often produce sentences that begin directly with predicates or use prepositional phrases in subject position, which is grammatically incorrect. This phenomenon indicates a misunderstanding of sentence hierarchy and functional roles within syntax.

2.4. Semantic Agreement in Indonesian Syntax

Semantic agreement refers to the relationship between meaning and grammatical structure in sentence construction. In Indonesian, semantic roles must align with syntactic positions to produce acceptable sentences. Kridalaksana (1982) explains that grammatical structures are not only governed by form but also by the logical relationship between sentence elements.

When omission occurs, semantic agreement is often disrupted. Although the sentence may still be interpretable, the absence of grammatical markers weakens clarity and coherence. This shows that learners may rely more on semantic intuition rather than syntactic rules when constructing sentences.

3. Method

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to analyze students' ungrammatical sentence constructions, with a particular focus on omission errors in Indonesian academic writing. The qualitative approach was chosen to allow an in-depth examination of linguistic patterns, especially in relation to semantic agreement and sentence structure.

3.2. Data Source and Participants

The data of this study were derived from students' written academic texts. The participants consisted of undergraduate students in the English Language and Literature program. Their written works were selected because they represent authentic language use in an academic context, where grammatical accuracy is expected.

A total of 69 sentences containing omission-related errors were identified and analyzed in this study. These sentences were extracted purposively based on the presence of ungrammatical constructions related to the omission of function words and syntactic elements.

3.3. Data Collection Technique

The data were collected using a documentation technique. Students' written assignments were gathered and carefully examined to identify sentences containing

omission errors. The researcher read the texts thoroughly and selected relevant data that reflected patterns of ungrammaticality.

Each selected sentence was then coded and classified based on its error type. The coding system (e.g., 01.01, 06.01) was used to organize the data systematically and facilitate analysis.

3.4. Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using a qualitative linguistic analysis framework focusing on semantic agreement and grammatical structure. The analysis involved several steps:

1. **Identification**

Identifying sentences that contain omission errors.

2. **Classification**

Classifying the data into categories of omission, namely: (a) omission of function words (e.g., complementizer *bahwa*, correlative conjunctions), and (b) omission of syntactic elements (e.g., subject omission, subject filled by prepositional phrases).

3. **Description**

Describing each error by comparing ungrammatical sentences with their corrected (grammatical) forms.

4. **Interpretation**

Interpreting the causes of errors based on linguistic principles, particularly the relationship between syntax and semantics.

5. **Validity of Data**

To ensure the validity of the analysis, the researcher applied theoretical triangulation by referring to established Indonesian grammar frameworks, particularly those proposed by Moeliono et al. (2017) and Kridalaksana (1982). These references were used to determine the grammaticality and semantic appropriateness of sentence constructions.

3.5. Focus of the Study

Although various types of ungrammaticality were found in the broader dataset, this study specifically focuses on omission errors. Other patterns, such as addition, substitution, and misordering, are excluded from this analysis and may be explored in future studies.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Omission of Function Words

The omission of function words identified in this study includes:

- (a) omission of the complementizer *bahwa* and
- (b) omission of one element of correlative conjunctions.

4.1.1. Omission of the Complementizer *bahwa*

Table 1 presents sentences illustrating the omission of the complementizer *bahwa*.

Table 1. Omission of the Complementizer *bahwa*

No.	Data Code	Ungrammatical Sentence	Grammatical Sentence	Description
1	01.01	Sardiman (2012) mengemukakan motivasi ekstrinsik adalah motif-motif yang aktif dan berfungsi karena adanya perangsang dari luar.	Sardiman (2012) mengemukakan bahwa motivasi ekstrinsik adalah motif-motif yang aktif dan berfungsi karena adanya perangsang dari luar.	Omission of the complementizer <i>bahwa</i>
2	01.02	Berdasarkan Tabel 1.1 di atas dapat dijelaskan terjadi kenaikan kinerja staf dari periode 2017 sampai 2018 senilai 1,25%.	Berdasarkan Tabel 1.1 di atas dapat dijelaskan bahwa terjadi kenaikan kinerja staf dari periode 2017 sampai 2018 senilai 1,25%.	Omission of the complementizer <i>bahwa</i>
3	01.03	BG Consulting (2003) menyatakan pengaruh penerapan dan pemahaman PP No. 23 Tahun 2018 berpengaruh positif terhadap kepatuhan wajib pajak UMKM.	BG Consulting (2003) menyatakan bahwa pengaruh penerapan dan pemahaman PP No. 23 Tahun 2018 berpengaruh positif terhadap kepatuhan wajib pajak UMKM.	Omission of the complementizer <i>bahwa</i>

These sentences are ungrammatical because they omit the complementizer *bahwa*, which is needed to clearly introduce a subordinate clause after reporting verbs like *mengemukakan*, *menyatakan*, and *dapat dijelaskan*. Adding *bahwa* improves clarity

and grammatical correctness by properly linking the main clause with the information being reported.

4.1.2. Omission of One Element of Correlative Conjunctions

Table 2 presents sentences showing the omission of one element in correlative conjunctions (*baik ... maupun ...*).

Table 2. Omission of One Element of Correlative Conjunctions (*baik ... maupun ...* → *maupun ...*)

No.	Data Code	Ungrammatical Sentence	Grammatical Sentence	Description
1	06.01	Konser musik di Indonesia saat ini sangat banyak diselenggarakan oleh pihak penyelenggara dengan mendatangkan musisi lokal maupun musisi internasional.	Konser musik di Indonesia saat ini sangat banyak diselenggarakan oleh pihak penyelenggara dengan mendatangkan baik musisi lokal maupun musisi internasional.	Omission of correlative conjunction (<i>baik</i>)
			Konser musik di Indonesia saat ini sangat banyak diselenggarakan oleh pihak penyelenggara dengan mendatangkan musisi lokal dan musisi internasional.	Alternative correction
2	06.02	Sustainable report menurut Global Reporting Initiative (2017) diartikan sebagai praktik pengukuran, pengungkapan dan usaha akuntabilitas dari kinerja organisasi dalam meraih tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan kepada para pemangku kepentingan di lingkungan internal maupun eksternal.	Sustainable report menurut Global Reporting Initiative (2017) diartikan sebagai praktik pengukuran, pengungkapan, dan usaha akuntabilitas dari kinerja organisasi dalam meraih tujuan pembangunan berkelanjutan kepada para pemangku kepentingan baik di lingkungan internal maupun eksternal.	Omission of correlative conjunction (<i>baik</i>)
			Sustainable report ... kepada para pemangku kepentingan di lingkungan	Alternative correction

internal dan eksternal.

These sentences are ungrammatical because they omit the correlative conjunction *baik*, which is required to properly pair with *maupun* in expressing parallel alternatives, although they can also be corrected by replacing the pair with the simpler conjunction *dan*.

4.2. Omission of Syntactic Function Elements

The omission of syntactic function elements includes:

- (a) omission of the subject and
- (b) subject filled by prepositional phrases.

4.2.1. Omission of Subject (S)

Table 3 presents sentences with omitted subjects.

Table 3. Omission of Subject (S)

No.	Data Code	Ungrammatical Sentence	Grammatical Sentence	Description
1	07.01	Diharapkan dapat menjadi masukan penting atau bahkan untuk perusahaan dalam mengambil strategi yang pas guna menaikkan kemampuan kinerja keuangan perusahaan.	Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi masukan penting bagi perusahaan dalam mengambil strategi yang tepat guna meningkatkan kinerja keuangan.	Omission of Subject
2	07.02	Dibangun berdasarkan konvensi yang membawa semua negara untuk secara bersama melakukan upaya dalam memerangi perubahan iklim dan beradaptasi dengan dampaknya.	International Financial Reporting Standards dibangun berdasarkan konvensi yang membawa semua negara untuk secara bersama melakukan upaya dalam memerangi perubahan iklim dan beradaptasi dengan dampaknya.	Omission of Subject
3	07.03	Dalam persaingan usaha, harus mampu mengevaluasi peluang-peluang kesempatan usaha	Dalam persaingan usaha, perusahaan harus mampu mengevaluasi peluang atau kesempatan usaha yang	Omission of Subject

yang dibutuhkan.

dibutuhkan.

These sentences are ungrammatical because they omit the subject, making the clause unclear about who performs the action, so adding an explicit subject (e.g., *hasil penelitian ini, International Financial Reporting Standards, perusahaan*) is necessary for clarity and completeness.

4.2.2. Subject Filled by Prepositional Phrases

1) Preposition: *dari*

Table 4. Subject Filled by Prepositional Phrase (*dari*)

No.	Data Code	Ungrammatical Sentence	Grammatical Sentence	Description
1	08.01	Dari tabel di atas menunjukkan bahwa tidak terdapat kesesuaian antara target kinerja dan realisasi.	Tabel di atas menunjukkan bahwa tidak terdapat kesesuaian antara target kinerja dan realisasi.	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>dari</i>)
2	08.02	Dari hasil penelitian ... menunjukkan bahwa total assets turn over (TATO) berpengaruh negatif terhadap financial distress.	Hasil penelitian ... menunjukkan bahwa total assets turn over (TATO) berpengaruh negatif terhadap financial distress.	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>dari</i>)
3	08.03	Dari data di atas dapat dilihat bahwa pada tahun 2022 Tokopedia berada pada posisi kedua ...	Berdasarkan data di atas dapat dilihat bahwa pada tahun 2022 Tokopedia berada pada posisi kedua ...	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>dari</i>)

Ungrammaticality occurs because the subject is formed using the preposition *dari*, which makes the structure unclear, so it should be omitted or replaced (e.g., with *berdasarkan*) to produce a clearer and grammatically correct sentence.

2) Preposition: *serta*

Table 5. Subject Filled by Prepositional Phrase (*serta*)

No.	Data Code	Ungrammatical Sentence	Grammatical Sentence	Description
1	09.01	Serta kasus-kasus yang	Kasus-kasus yang	Subject filled by

		melibatkan kecurangan laporan keuangan ...	melibatkan kecurangan laporan keuangan ...	prepositional phrase (<i>serta</i>)
2	09.02	Serta ada juga dua pemegang saham lainnya ...	Ada dua pemegang saham lainnya ...	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>serta</i>)
3	09.03	Serta perusahaan perlu memperhatikan hal tersebut ...	Perusahaan perlu memperhatikan hal tersebut ...	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>serta</i>)

The error arises from using *serta* at the beginning of the sentence, which disrupts the subject position, so eliminating it helps produce a clearer and grammatically acceptable structure.

3) Preposition: *pada*

Table 6. Subject Filled by Prepositional Phrase (*pada*)

No.	Data Code	Ungrammatical Sentence	Grammatical Sentence	Description
1	10.01	Pada tabel 1.1 memperlihatkan bahwa ...	Tabel 1.1 memperlihatkan bahwa ...	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>pada</i>)
2	10.02	Pada variabel kepercayaan tidak berhasil membuktikan ...	Variabel kepercayaan tidak berhasil membuktikan ...	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>pada</i>)
3	10.03	Pada perusahaan besar umumnya memiliki risiko ...	Perusahaan besar pada umumnya memiliki risiko ...	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>pada</i>)

The issue occurs because the preposition *pada* is incorrectly used to introduce the subject, which weakens the sentence structure, so it should be removed or repositioned to make the sentence grammatically clear.

4) Preposition: *dan*

Table 7. Subject Filled by Prepositional Phrase (*dan*)

No.	Data Code	Ungrammatical Sentence	Grammatical Sentence	Description
1	11.01	Dan penyelenggara EO menampilkan banyak ...	Penyelenggara EO menampilkan banyak ...	Subject filled by prepositional

		musisi ...	musisi ...	phrase (<i>dan</i>)
2	11.02	Dan saat ini The Sounds Project mampu menjadi festival ...	Saat ini The Sounds Project mampu menjadi festival ...	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>dan</i>)
3	11.03	Dan berkembangnya pikir seseorang ...	Dengan berkembangnya pola pikir seseorang ...	Subject filled by prepositional phrase (<i>dan</i>)

The problem lies in the use of *dan* at the beginning of the sentence, which improperly links the clause without a preceding context, so it should be omitted to maintain a complete and independent sentence structure.

4.3. Discussion

This study reveals that students' ungrammatical sentence constructions are predominantly characterized by omission errors, particularly in function words and syntactic elements. These findings indicate that students experience difficulties not only in lexical selection but also in maintaining structural completeness in sentence construction. The discussion below elaborates each type of omission and its linguistic implications.

4.3.1. Omission of Function Words

The omission of function words, especially the complementizer *bahwa* and elements of correlative conjunctions, demonstrates students' limited awareness of the role of grammatical markers in forming complex and cohesive sentences.

The absence of the complementizer *bahwa* suggests that students tend to simplify sentence structures by directly attaching clauses without appropriate connectors. In Indonesian, *bahwa* functions as a marker introducing subordinate clauses, particularly in reported speech or declarative complements. Its omission results in structurally incomplete sentences, even though the intended meaning may still be inferred. This indicates that students prioritize semantic delivery over grammatical accuracy.

Similarly, the omission of one element in correlative conjunctions, such as *baik ... maupun ...*, reflects an incomplete understanding of paired conjunction structures. Students often retain only one element (*maupun*) without its required pair (*baik*), leading to imbalance in sentence structure. This pattern suggests that students recognize the semantic function of conjunctions but fail to apply their formal syntactic rules. Such errors highlight the gap between receptive knowledge and productive competence in using function words.

4.3.2. Omission of Syntactic Function Elements

Omission errors are also evident at the syntactic level, particularly in the absence of subjects and in constructions where subjects are incorrectly filled by prepositional phrases.

1) Omission of Subject (S)

The omission of subjects indicates a significant structural issue, as the subject is a core element in Indonesian sentence construction. Many sentences in the data begin with predicates such as *diharapkan* or *dibangun*, without explicitly stating the subject. This pattern suggests the influence of passive constructions; however, students fail to provide the necessary agent or topic, resulting in incomplete clauses.

This tendency may also be influenced by spoken language patterns, where subjects are often implied and omitted for brevity. When transferred into formal academic writing, however, such omissions lead to ungrammatical constructions. Therefore, these errors reflect students' difficulty in adapting from informal to formal linguistic contexts.

2) Subject Filled by Prepositional Phrases

Another prominent pattern is the use of prepositional phrases (e.g., *dari*, *pada*, *serta*, *dan*) in subject position. Structurally, Indonesian does not permit prepositional phrases to function as subjects. However, students frequently place these elements at the beginning of sentences, creating the illusion of a subject while actually omitting the required nominal element.

For example, constructions such as *Dari tabel di atas menunjukkan...* indicate that students misinterpret introductory phrases as subjects. This reflects interference from rhetorical habits, where writers attempt to foreground contextual information before presenting the main clause. However, without restructuring the sentence, this results in syntactic inconsistency.

The frequent use of conjunctions like *dan* or *serta* at the beginning of sentences also indicates cohesion strategies that are improperly applied. While such forms are acceptable in spoken discourse, they are generally avoided in formal academic writing unless properly integrated into sentence structure. This further supports the argument that students rely heavily on spoken language conventions when producing written texts.

3) Linguistic and Pedagogical Implications

Overall, the dominance of omission errors suggests that students' main challenge lies in constructing grammatically complete sentences rather than in conveying meaning. Their sentences often remain semantically interpretable but structurally deficient. This aligns with the notion that second-language or academic language learners tend to prioritize meaning over form.

From a linguistic perspective, these findings highlight the importance of functional elements in maintaining grammatical relations and sentence cohesion. The absence of such elements disrupts the balance between syntax and semantics, resulting in ungrammatical constructions.

Pedagogically, this study suggests that instruction should emphasize:

- the explicit teaching of sentence structure, particularly the role of subjects and complementizers,
- the correct use of correlative conjunctions as fixed pairs,
- and the distinction between spoken and written language conventions.

Providing students with contrastive examples of grammatical and ungrammatical sentences, as shown in this study, can help raise their awareness of structural completeness. Additionally, focused practice on revising incomplete sentences may improve their grammatical accuracy in academic writing.

5. Conclusion

This study examined omission errors in Indonesian students' sentence constructions with a focus on semantic agreement. The findings show that omission is a dominant pattern of ungrammaticality in students' academic writing. These errors occur in two main forms, namely omission of function words and omission of syntactic function elements.

Omission of function words is mainly reflected in the absence of the complementizer *bahwa* and the incomplete use of correlative conjunctions such as *baik ... maupun* Meanwhile, omission of syntactic elements is characterized by the absence of subjects and the incorrect use of prepositional phrases in subject position. Although the sentences produced by students are often still semantically understandable, they are grammatically incomplete and do not fully conform to Indonesian syntactic rules.

The findings indicate that students tend to prioritize meaning over grammatical form, which results in sentences that are communicatively effective but structurally weak. This suggests a gap in students' understanding of sentence structure, particularly in maintaining the balance between syntax and semantics in academic writing.

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