

AN ANALYSIS OF THE USE OF TENSES ON ENGLISH ABSTRACT

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Abstract. Most of national journals using Indonesia language in the articles have a requirement to write an abstract in two languages; Indonesia and English. Writing an English abstract should apply a correct tenses. Some people believe that writing an English abstract uses present (both simple present and present perfect) and past (both simple past and past perfect tense) tense. The study aimed to analyze the use of tenses on English abstract published in *Jurnal Ilmu dan Teknologi Kesehatan (JITK)*. It was a qualitative research with descriptive method. The population was 176 documents, however, by checking the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the sample were 40 English abstracts. The data were collected by the observation and note technique by Mahsun. Furthermore, those were analyzed by triangulation analysis. The research result showed that there were five tenses used in the English abstracts; simple present tense, simple past tense, simple future tense, present perfect tense, and past perfect tense. Those were differently written in each component of abstract. Based on the result, it can be concluded that the English abstracts use different tenses in each component of abstracts. Therefore, to make the similarity of the use of tenses in each component of abstract, it should be informed about the exact tenses used in writing an English abstract.

Keywords: Analysis, Tenses, Abstract.

INTRODUCTION

Abstract is one of the parts and the most important element in the scientific article (Fitria, 2021). It must be written in a brief, clear, and concise sentences, so that it contains 150 up to 300 words only (Kholili, 2022; Sitepu, 2009). A good abstract can attract the readers to read more about the article. On the other hand, abstract is a key or a short summary of the full scientific paper.

Nowadays, scientific paper abstracts published in journal have been arranged in both bahasa Indonesia and English. *Jurnal Ilmu dan Teknologi Kesehatan (JITK)* is one of the journals giving requirement to write an abstract in two languages; bahasa Indonesia and English. However, writing an English abstract is not easy. The authors should know the exact verb and other grammatical rules used in the abstract. There are five components of abstract; *background* contains the reasons why the authors chose the research, *purpose* is about what discussed in the research, *method* talks about the methodology used in the research in concise sentences, *result* states the findings and analysis, and *conclusion* tells about the implications of the research, recommendation and suggestion (Nurhayati, 2017; Sitepu, 2009; Sudipa, 2012). Yet, not all the abstracts contain the five component because based on the content, abstract is divided into two types; (a) descriptive abstract just mentions purpose and the content of the study; it does not show the result and conclusion; and (b) informative abstract gives explanation about background, purpose, method, result, conclusion (five components); it is usually used in articles published in journals (Sitepu, 2009).

Tenses in English is related to the use of verb and adverb of time (Bukit, 2020). Different time uses different verb or we call as verb tense. Writing an English abstract also focuses on what tenses used in each components of the abstract. A study by Salager-Meyer (Nurhayati, 2017) reported that from 84 medical abstracts had different verb tenses based on the functions like the past tense is used in purpose, method, result, and case presentation; while the present tense is prevalent in conclusion, recommendation, and data synthesis. However, in fact, the tense usage in abstracts is quite complicated as mentioned by Magnum that it's not always easy to decide which tense to use in arranging an abstract (Magnum, 2021). For example, if the research was performed in the past, some aspects need to be referred to use the present tense. It means that the use of tenses is absed on the context of the sentence. There are 16 tenses in English grammar some tenses commonly used in English abstracts (Joshi, 2013; Magnum, 2021; Nurhayati, 2017): (1) Simple present tense is used to state what is generally true, general statement (written in *background*) and indicate the implications of the research findings (written in *conclusion*) (Harun & Rustipa, 2022; Solihat & Syahrizal, 2020); (2) Simple past tense is to describe specific events that happened and ended in the past (written in *purpose, method, and result*) (Bukit, 2020); (3) Present perfect tense talks about a past event that is linked to the present, trends, or about events that have ended or happened recently or still continuing; (4) Past perfect tense describes two related past events that occurred at different times in the past and claims non-generality about past literature in *background*.

In line with the explanation above, the reserachers were interested in analyzing the tenses used in the English abstract, on the other hand, the objective of the study was to analyze the use of tenses on the English abstract published in *Jurnal Ilmu dan Teknologi Kesehatan (JITK)*.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was a qualitative study using descriptive method. It used human instrument as data source that had function to determine focus of the research, choose data source, conduct data collection, check the data quality, analyze the data, and draw the conclusion based on the findings (Soekidjo, 2012). There are five kinds of qualitative data such as physical objects, still images, sounds, moving images: video, and texts (Bernard et al., 2017). In line with that, the data source in this research was texts about English abstract obtained by downloading the documents from the website of *Jurnal Ilmu dan Teknologi Kesehatan (JITK)*. The population was 176 abstracts, however, 40 abstracts were research sample based on criteria of inclusion, the research subject can represent the sample that fulfill the requirements, and exclusion, the subject cannot be the research sample because of having no requirements (Moleong, 2018). The inclusion criteria of this research included (1) the articles published on the online journal of Universitas Bhamada Slawi; (2) the research articles with English abstract; and (3) the articles published between 2019 – 2022. While, the exclusion criteria were that the volume of the journal had more than 10 articles. Based on the requirements, the sample of the research were Vol. 13 No. 1 (2022) with 13 English abstracts, Vol. 12 No. 2 (2021) with 13 English abstracts, and Vol. 12 No. 1 (2021) with 14 English abstracts.

After determining the sample, the researchers used the observation and note technique (Mahsun, 2005) by Mahsun stating that the observation technique was conducted to observe the language use, in this way, the language use was about written form (English abstract); furthermore the note technique was that taking a note on some relevant forms in the study meaning that the researchers identified some tenses used in the English abstracts.

The data analyze technique was used triangulation analysis which had three steps; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Sugiyono, 2016). Data reduction was conducted by choosing which data coded and removed (Prastowo, 2012). In line with that, the data reduction was by downloading the English abstracts, coding the abstracts, and determining the data based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. In the data display, the researchers observed the English abstracts by reading the abstracts carefully, and taking a note the use of tenses in each component of the abstracts. Those data were displayed in the form of table and Figures. The last step was about conclusion drawing/verification. It was performed by presenting the research result compared than the theory used

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Based on the data analysis, it was found five tenses used in the English abstracts. The five tenses were applied in each components of abstract. The description of the tense usage in each components of abstract is explained in the following table.

Table 1. Tenses Used in The English Abstract

No	Code	Components of abstracts				
		Background	Purpose	Method	Result	Conclusion
1.	A-01	simple present tense + present perfect tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
2.	A-02	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense
3.	A-03	simple present tense + present perfect tense	simple present tense	simple present tense + simple past tense	no result	simple present tense
4.	A-04	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
5.	A-05	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
6.	A-06	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
7.	A-07	simple present tense	unidentified tense	simple present tense	simple present tense + present perfect tense	simple present tense
8.	A-08	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
9.	A-09	no background	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple present tense
10.	A-10	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
11.	A-11	simple present tense + simple past tense + present perfect tense	unidentified tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense
12.	A-12	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
13.	A-13	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
14.	B-01	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense	simple past tense	no conclusion
15.	B-02	simple present tense + present perfect tense	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
16.	B-03	no background	simple present tense + simple past tense + simple future tense	unidentified tense	unidentified tense	simple present tense
17.	B-04	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	no result	no conclusion

No	Code	Components of abstracts				
		Background	Purpose	Method	Result	Conclusion
18.	B-05	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
19.	B-06	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	no conclusion
20.	B-07	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
21.	B-08	no background	unidentified tense	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
22.	B-09	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
23.	B-10	simple present tense + simple past tense + present perfect tense	simple past tense	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
24.	B-11	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
25.	B-12	simple present tense	unidentified tense	unidentified tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
26.	B-13	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
27.	C-01	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
28.	C-02	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
29.	C-03	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
30.	C-04	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
31.	C-05	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
32.	C-06	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
33.	C-07	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple present tense	no conclusion
34.	C-08	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple present tense
35.	C-09	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
36.	C-10	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	no conclusion
37.	C-11	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
38.	C-12	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple present tense	simple present tense	simple present tense
39.	C-13	simple present tense	unidentified tense	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple present tense + simple past tense	simple past tense
40.	C-14	simple present tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	simple past tense	no conclusion

Table 1. shows that identification of tenses used in 40 English abstracts. The tenses used were simple present tense, simple past tense, simple future tense, present perfect tense, and past perfect tense. Those were written in different components of abstract.

1.1 Tenses Used in “Background”

“Background” is the first part of abstract containing the explanation of why the research needs to be conducted in two or three sentences (Sitepu, 2009). From 40 English abstracts, there were three tenses used in *background*.

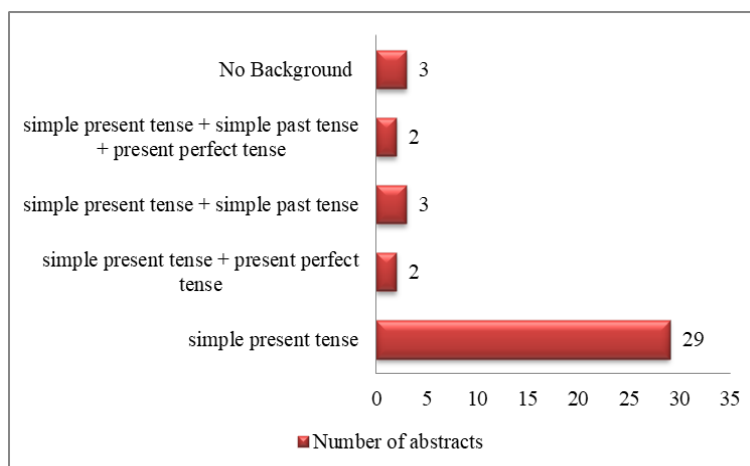


Figure 1. Tenses used in *Background*

Figure 1 describes what tenses used in background in the abstracts. There are 29 abstracts applied simple present tense, 3 abstracts of simple present and past tense, 2 abstracts of simple present and present perfect tense, 2 abstracts of simple present, past, and present perfect tense. According to the explanation about tenses used in background (Joshi, 2013; Magnum, 2021), the tenses are suitable to be used in background; using simple present tense to describe about fact and general statement, for example: (A-05) *Dry eye disease is a disease that is mostly encountered and can occur due to several factors*. Simple past tense is used to show the past event as mentioned in A-08 *The Indonesian Child Protection Commission stated that from 2011 to August 2014 reported 1,430 cases of bullying in schools*. Present perfect tense is to state the past event that is linked to the present as an example in A-11 *The increasing of the elderly has impacted on their quality of life*. However, there are three abstracts that have no background. Those are started by the research objective.

1.2 Tenses Used in “Purpose”

The second component of abstract is purpose/objective/goal/aim. It contains the formulation of the research problem that is usually written in one short sentence (Sitepu, 2009).

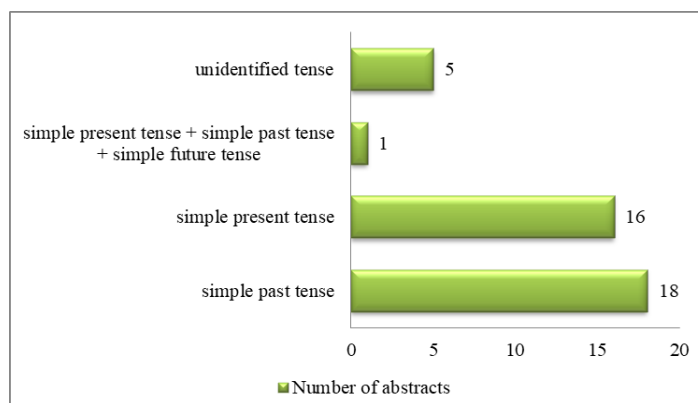
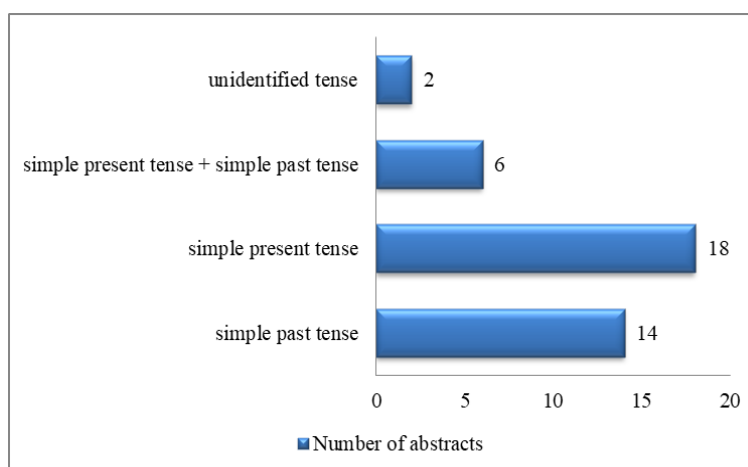


Figure 2. Tenses used in *Purpose*

Some people claim that “purpose” can be used either simple present tense or simple past tense. Yet, simple future tense should not be used to state “purpose”. Based on the Figure above, from 40 samples, 18 abstracts uses simple past tense, 16 abstracts of simple present tense, and 1 abstract (B-03) of simple past (*The aim of the study was that we all know that applying cold compresses can reduce pain*), future (*Drug therapy given will have side effects.*), and present (*The alternative therapy is cold water compresses*) tense. Unfortunately, there are 5 abstracts with unidentified tense in “purpose”. The researchers stated that there were grammatical errors. For instance, a sentence in B-08 *The purpose of the research to determine the relationship between safety knowledge and unsafe behavior of onion farmers* the sentence is incorrect and cannot be identified what tense is because there is no verb in the sentence. It should be added by *was* (simple past tense) or *is* (simple present tense) between *research* and *to*; *The purpose of the research was/is to determine the relationship between safety knowledge and unsafe behavior of onion farmers*

1.3 Tenses Used in “Method”

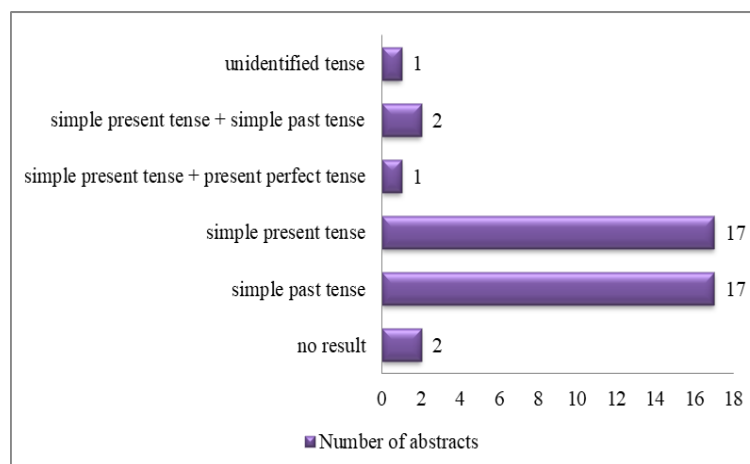
This component is to describe the methodology used in the research that explained in a concise sentence by avoiding the statistical formulas of data analysis (Sitepu, 2009). In this research, there have been two tenses used; simple present tense (18 abstracts), simple past tense (14 abstracts), and combination of simple present and past tense (6 abstracts). 2 abstracts were in unidentified tense; B-03 *Performed using 10 literature review articles and national literature that have met the requirements* there is subject and verb in the sentence, so that it should be written as **The research used** 10 literature review articles and national literature that have met the requirements; and B-12 *The research design descriptive with cross sectional approach* has no verb; it should be edited to *The research design was/used* descriptive with cross sectional approach



Figur 3. Tenses used in *Method*

1.4 Tenses used in “result”

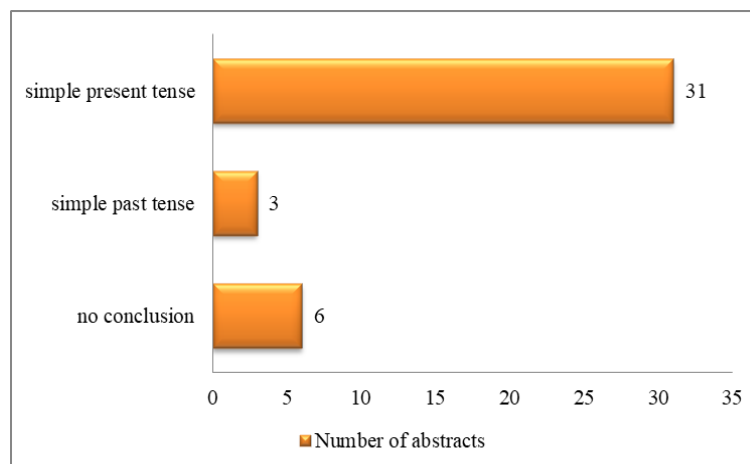
“Result” states the findings of the research mentioned in real, however, it cannot be explained in detail because it can reduce the readers’ motivation to know more about the research (Sitepu, 2009). In this research, it shows that simple present tense and simple past tense have been used in “result” component; 17 abstracts respectively. While, 2 abstracts use a combination of simple present and past tense, 1 abstract with a combination of simple present and present perfect tense. Unidentified tense (1 abstract) is also found in this stage, *Shows results showed giving cold water compresses greatly affects the pain factor of the mother’s wound after childbirth*. The researchers cannot find the exact tense used in the sentence because there is a grammatical errors; *shows* should be omitted and changed to *the*. Besides, 2 abstracts are detected of having no result.



Figur 4. Tenses used in *Result*

1.5 Tenses Used in “Conclusion”

The last component of informative abstract is writing a conclusion. It is the implications of the study, conveys the recommendation or suggestion, and written in a brief sentence (Sitepu, 2009).



Figur 5. Tenses used in *Conclusion*

Based on the Figur 5, it describes that simple present and past tense are used to write “conclusion” in the abstracts. There are 31 abstracts using simple present tense, 3 abstracts with simple past tense, and 6 abstracts having no conclusion. Related to the theory discussed, simple present tense is used to describe “conclusion” because it contains the implications of the research, however, it depends on the journal publisher. There are two possibilities of why 6 abstracts did not show “conclusion”; because it was the authors’ negligence or included descriptive abstract.

CONCLUSION

Abstract is one of the main important things in a scientific paper. The abstract is usually written in two languages; bahasa Indonesia and English. As the objective of the research, it has been found that there were five tenses used in the English abstracts published in *Jurnal Ilmu dan Teknologi Kesehatan (JITK)*. Those were simple present tense, present perfect tense, simple past tense, past perfect tense, and simple future tense. The tenses has been applied in different components of the abstracts. However, there are 10 files that having no one or two components of

abstracts; 3 abstracts with no background, 1 abstract with no result, 5 abstracts with no conclusion, and 1 abstract which has no result and conclusion including in descriptive abstract. Also, there are some unidentified tenses in the abstracts that make confused especially for the foreign readers. To avoid the differences in writing an English abstract especially for what tenses used in the abstracts, the publisher should provide a requirement in the form of file about tenses used in each component of abstract.

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