



Exploration of the Semantics of Inflectional Morphemes in Student Thesis Abstracts

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Abstract

This research highlights the importance of inflectional morphemes in thesis abstracts which aim to improve clarity and meaning. This research examines the use of inflectional morphemes by alumni of the Master of English Education Program at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo. This research uses a qualitative approach with data obtained from thesis abstracts. The findings of this study reveal that the use of plural morphemes, possessive, present tense, past tense, and present participle has a significant role in increasing semantic richness and grammatical structure. The study concludes that the understanding and proper use of inflectional morphemes can significantly improve the quality of academic writing. This study also fills a gap in the academic literature and offers practical insights for students and researchers to perfect their writing skills.

Keyword: inflectional morpheme, thesis abstract, semantics, grammar

INTRODUCTION

Abstracts can be a useful tool for communicating the most crucial aspects of a research study's methodologies and findings because they are frequently the final section of a lengthy body of work (Drury et al., 2023). Writing a thesis abstract is essential in academic communication as it offers a concise yet comprehensive overview of the research findings. There are various studies that emphasize the importance of abstracts in academic literature. A study highlighting the dominant Movements and Steps in thesis abstracts was able to show that students often follow certain guidelines (Wijaya et al., 2023). In composing a good abstract, the use of inflectional morphemes plays a crucial role as it can affect the clarity and meaning conveyed. Inflectional morphemes can help organize the grammatical structure needed to convey information effectively (Zuhri et al., 2022). This research raises the importance of understanding the use of inflectional morphemes in the context of academic writing specifically in writing thesis abstracts.

The problem that is raised in this study is the lack of understanding and attention to the use of morphemes in writing thesis abstracts. Although inflectional morphemes have a significant role in clarifying meaning and improving the quality of academic texts, many writers are less aware of the importance of the proper use of these grammatical elements. Research has shown that, especially for second language learners, using inflectional morphemes incorrectly can result in misconceptions and lower text quality (OLawe, 2022). This results in abstracts that are written often lacking effectiveness in conveying the essence of the research, thus impacting the communication of research results that are not optimal.

Existing studies or literature on academic writing have been extensive, but they are more focused on discussing aspects such as cohesion, coherence, and academic vocabulary. On the other hand, there is a noticeable gap in the lack of research that focuses on the use of inflectional morphemes in thesis abstracts. Although research has studied syntactic structure and sentence complexity in abstracts (Adewumi & Ade-Ibijola, 2023; Mubshirah et al., 2023), explorations that specifically and in detail discuss inflectional morphemes are still very limited. Understanding the use of inflectional morphemes in thesis abstracts is crucial as they contribute to the grammatical accuracy and clarity of academic writing. Therefore, analyzing semantic inflectional morphemes in thesis abstracts can provide valuable insights into how linguistic elements can affect the quality and effectiveness of academic writing. Moreover, this analysis can also fill a significant gap in the current academic literature.

Objective of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how students enrolled in the Master of English Education Program at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo employ inflectional morphemes in their thesis abstracts. This study's primary goal is to categorize the many inflectional morphemes that are employed in academic writing and analyze their semantic roles. Therefore, it is anticipated that this study will contribute to a better understanding of how thesis abstracts can be made clearer and more high-quality through the usage of inflectional morphemes.

Literature Review

Inflectional affix, or inflectional morpheme, is one kind of bound morpheme, but, inflectional affixes are morphemes that are appended to class words without altering them. It implies that adding inflectional affixes can only alter the grammatical forms of the root. Eight categories of inflectional morphemes exist in English, and they are as follows: One can find examples of (1) "-s" plural, like "pencil + s), (2) "-s" possessive, like "John +s), (3) "-s" present, like "read + s), (4) "-ed" past, like "play + ed), (5) "-ing" present participle, like "read + ing), (6) "-er" comparative, like "smart + er), (7) "-est" superlative, like "smart + est), and (8) "-en" past participle, like "write + en) (Wardhani in Arbi et al., 2022).

METHOD

Design

Aiming for accuracy and factual portrayal, qualitative descriptive research is used in many studies to methodically describe and analyze phenomena (Schmidt et al., 2022). With this method, researchers can explore the nuances and features of the topic. This context focuses on the phenomena of students' thesis abstracts using inflectional morphemes.

Research Subject

Ten individuals who completed the English Language Education Masters Program at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo in the 2019–2020 academic year served as the subjects of this study. Just 50% of all alumni were chosen by the researchers to serve as research subjects. Five people make up the sample for this study, in accordance with the idea advanced by Arikunto (2002) (Arbi et al., 2022), which says that researchers are free to take samples if the population is smaller than 100. This indicates that the five research abstracts selected for this study's focus.

Data Collection

The documentation technique was used to gather the data. The master's thesis abstracts from STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo's Master of English Education program students served as the source material for this study. Inflectional morphemes, particularly present participle morphemes, are identified and categorized in each abstract through analysis.

Data Analysis

This data analysis is conducted using the following steps:

1. Identifying every word that contains an inflectional present participle in an abstract that is analyzed.
2. Classifying the aforementioned words based on their grammatical and semantic functions.
3. Performing a semantic analysis in order to understand the meaning and application of the aforementioned terms in the abstract context of the study.

Validity and Trustworthiness

By contrasting the analysis's findings with pertinent literature, the researcher employed data triangulation to guarantee the validity of the data. To further assure dependability, the researcher additionally requested that colleagues double-check the analysis's findings

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Plural Category (-s/-es Suffix)

In this study, we identified 37 words that belong to the Plural category. These words generally have the suffix -s or -es to indicate the plural form. The following is a semantic analysis of these words:

- A. Number of Words: 37
- B. Word Examples: "students", "researchers", "contexts", "cycles", "findings"
- C. Grammatical Function: Signify more than one entity.
- D. Semantic Function: Indicates more than one quantity, which often changes the scale or scope of the resulting meaning.
- E. Meaning in Academic Contexts:
 - "Students": Refers to a number of individuals who are subjects or participants in research.
 - "Researchers": Indicates collaboration or contribution from more than one researcher.
 - "Contexts": Refers to various situations or settings relevant to the research.
 - "Cycles": Indicates multiple cycles or phases in the research process.
 - "Findings": Refers to the various results or findings obtained from the research.

The use of plural inflectional morphemes in thesis abstracts serves to indicate the number and diversity of entities studied in the research. This not only provides information about the scale of the research but also enriches the semantic context of the research results presented. Through this semantic analysis, it can be seen how the plural form contributes to a deeper understanding of the research conducted and the findings produced.

2. Possessive category (Ending -'s or -s')

In this study, we identified 9 words that fall under the Possessive category. These words generally have the suffix -'s or -s' to indicate possession or association. The following is a semantic analysis of these words:

- A. Number of Words: 9
- B. Example Words: "students'", "pupil's"
- C. Grammatical Function: Signaling a possession or association relationship between two entities.

D. Semantic Function: Indicates a possession or association relationship that provides additional information about the subject or object in the context of the research.

E. Meaning in Academic Contexts:

"Students": Indicates something that belongs to or relates to students.

"Pupil's": Indicates something that belongs to or relates to a pupil.

The use of possessive inflectional morphemes in thesis abstracts serves to indicate ownership or a relationship between two entities, providing additional information that enriches the context of the subject or object of research. This analysis shows how the possessive form affects the understanding and interpretation of academic texts, emphasizing the importance of relationships or associations in the research context.

3. Present Tense Categories (-s Suffix)

In this research, we identified 10 words that fall under the Present Tense category. These words generally have the suffix -s to indicate the singular form in present tense. The following is a semantic analysis of these words:

A. Number of Words: 10

B. Example Words: "discusses", "uses", "shows", "means",

C. Grammatical Function: Signifies an action performed by the singular subject in the present tense.

D. Semantic Function: Indicates an action that is taking place or is a current custom, gives emphasis to an activity or statement of fact that prevails in the research context.

E. Meaning in Academic Contexts:

"Discusses": Describes the activity of discussing or studying a topic.

"Uses": Indicates the application or use of a particular method, theory, or tool.

"Shows": Indicates the presentation of data or results that demonstrate certain findings.

"Means": Defines or explains the meaning of a concept or finding.

The use of present tense inflectional morphemes in thesis abstracts serves to indicate ongoing action or current customs, provide information about activities or statements of fact relevant in the research context. This analysis shows how the present tense affects the understanding and interpretation of academic texts, emphasizing current research activities and findings.

4. Past Tense Categories (-ed Suffix)

In this study, we identified 24 words that belong to the past tense category. These words generally have an -ed ending to indicate a completed action. The following is a semantic analysis of these words:

A. Number of Words: 24

B. Example Words: "rejected", "accepted", "concluded", "carried", "focused"

C. Grammatical Function: Signifies an action that has been completed in the past.

D. Semantic Function: Indicates an action or result that has been achieved or carried out, emphasizes the completion of an activity or decision in a research context.

E. Meaning in Academic Contexts:

"Rejected": Signaling that the hypothesis or proposal is not accepted after analysis.

"Accepted": Signaling that a method or result is accepted by the community or within the study.

"Concluded": Indicates that a study has reached a certain conclusion.

"Carried": Indicates that an action or survey has been carried out.

"Focused": Indicates that the main attention of the study is directed at a particular aspect.

The use of past tense inflectional morphemes in words such as "rejected", "accepted", "concluded", "carried", and "focused" provides information about actions or decisions that have been taken or achieved in the past in the context of research. These past tense forms help emphasise that the findings or actions described have been completed and provide important information about the results and process of the research.

5. Present Participle Category (-ing Suffix)

In this study, we identified 45 words that belong to the present participle category. These words generally have an -ing suffix to indicate an ongoing action or as an adjectival form. The following is a semantic analysis of these words:

A. Number of Words: 45

B. Example Words: "reading", "using", "developing", "according", "speaking"

C. Grammatical Function: Indicates an ongoing action or functions as an adjective.

D. Semantic Function: Signaling an action or condition that occurs at the same time as speech or as part of a description in a particular context.

E. Meaning in Academic Contexts:

"Reading": Indicates the ongoing or usual action of reading.

"Using": Indicates the ongoing use of a tool or method.

"Developing": Indicates an ongoing development process.

"According": Refers to a reference or opinion that is being explained.

"Speaking": Indicates the ongoing or usual act of speaking.

The use of present participle inflectional morphemes in words such as "reading", "using", "developing", "according", and "speaking" provides information about ongoing or habitual actions or conditions in the research context. This present participle form helps emphasise the activity that is happening and provides a more detailed description in the research abstract.

Discussion

The examination of inflectional morphemes in the thesis abstracts of the students offers a sophisticated comprehension of the ways in which grammatical structures enhance the semantic richness of scholarly writing (Arbi et al., 2022; Ariza-Pinzón, 2021). The intricacy and accuracy needed in scholarly communication are highlighted by the identification of 45 present participles, 37 plurals, 24 past tense verbs, 10 present tense verbs, and 9 possessives. For the purpose of expressing continuing acts or states, present participles such as "reading" and "using" are essential. Academic writing can become livelier and more detailed by using the present participle (Mikesell, 2007). Plural forms were discovered in this study quite frequently. This implies that using plurals is crucial when talking about the various dimensions and wider ramifications of study (Patson, 2021).

Comparatively, the study also highlights the role of past tense in marking completed actions, providing clarity on the stages of research as seen in words like "concluded" and "focused". Past tense verbs are pivotal for delineating the progression and outcomes of scholarly investigations (Widiyawati, 2022). The presence of possessive forms indicates a significant relationship and ownership within the research context (Noverino et al., 2019). That implies that the secret to properly attributing work and recognizing contributions is to use possessive inflectional words. This research adds to the body of knowledge by illuminating the particular roles and frequency of these grammatical elements in thesis abstracts. Taken together, these findings support the significance of a wide variety of inflectional morphemes in improving the depth and comprehensibility of academic texts.

The categories of academic writing and language education will be significantly impacted by the theoretical and practical consequences of this work. The results theoretically advance our knowledge of how inflectional morphemes influence the meaning and coherence of academic texts, so illuminating the ways in which grammatical structures might be successfully employed to enhance communication in scholarly and scientific contexts. The results may also serve as a foundation for more focused, important, and thorough follow-up studies on the application of morphemes in other academic text genres. The findings of this study can be practically applied to assist researchers and students in selecting and utilizing inflectional forms appropriately to improve the clarity and impact of their scientific papers and thesis abstracts. Therefore, in addition to adding to linguistic theory and academic writing, this study offers helpful, real-world strategies for enhancing academic writing abilities.

This research has several advantages that can be recognized. These include the use of a systematic methodology and a specific focus on inflectional morphemes which allows for an in-depth analysis of their grammatical role in academic texts. The selection of subjects from alumni of the Master of English Education program provided a representative sample for this analysis, while the qualitative approach allowed for a detailed exploration of the function and meaning of morphemes in academic contexts. However, this study also has some shortcomings. The relatively small sample size may limit the applicability of the findings to a wider context. In addition, the specific focus on inflectional morphemes may overlook linguistic factors that also have an important role in constructing the meaning and clarity of academic texts. Future research with larger samples and a more comprehensive approach may provide a broader and deeper picture of language use in the academic writing process.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of the use of inflectional morphemes in the thesis abstracts of alumni of the Master of English Education Program at STKIP PGRI Sidoarjo. The analysis shows that the use of inflectional morphemes such as plural, possessive, past tense, present tense, and present participle contribute significantly to the clarity and semantic richness of academic texts. Through the identification and analysis of these morphemes, this study reveals how these grammatical elements help to structure the grammatical structure needed to convey information effectively. The findings enrich the existing literature by providing new insights into the role of inflectional morphemes in thesis abstract writing. It makes an important contribution to linguistic theory and academic writing practice. In addition, the researcher did not find superlative and comparative inflectional morphemes.

Based on these findings, it is suggested that students and researchers pay more attention to the use of inflectional morphemes in their thesis abstract writing. More intensive training and guidance on the use of these grammatical elements can help improve the quality and clarity of academic writing. In addition, further research with a larger sample and a more comprehensive approach can be conducted to broaden the understanding of morpheme usage in other academic writing contexts.

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