LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS FOUND IN CURRICULUM VITAE WRITTEN BY EFL STUDENTS IN ENGLISH FOR OFFICE COURSE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate linguistic problems found in curriculum vitae written by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students enrolled in an English for Office course. Curriculum vitae is an essential professional document that reflects students' readiness to enter the workplace; however, many EFL students still encounter difficulties in producing accurate and appropriate language for professional purposes.This research use a qualitative descriptive design using document analysis. The Participants were 15 of third semester of the English Education Study Program at Institut Az Zuhra. The data consisted of 15 curriculum vitae documents written, which analyzed by identifying, classifying, and calculating the frequency of linguistic problems, which were categorized into grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The findings showed that grammatical problems were the most frequent, representing for 45 errors (50%), followed by vocabulary misuse with 32 errors (35%) and mechanical errors with 23 errors (15%). These results indicate that students still lack mastery of formal written English required for professional documents. The study suggests that English for Office instruction should emphasize grammar accuracy, appropriate word choice, and exposure to authentic professional language.
Keywords: Curriculum Vitae, EFL Students, English for Office, Linguistic Problems, Professional Writing

INTRODUCTION

In this globalization era, the self-representation is needed as the important qualification in job marketing at the company. Through the description of the self in a document can make a proof someone's capability and skill that can be used based on the job application. As the development of the world in a globalization, someone have to show the capability-self through the document in case to tell the requirement needed. The ability to create a professional documents in English become a foundation and essential part in

the competitive job market now. For EFL students, professional writing abilities are especially crucial since they must be able to communicate clearly and appropriately (Brown, 2000). The curriculum vitae (CV), which is a written representation of a person's credentials, abilities, and experiences, is one of the most crucial professional papers (Hyland, 2004).

In the higher education, the English for Office course is designed as the tools to support the students in practical language skills needed in workplace area setting. This course is settled on some parts of material that can enrich the students' knowledge to improve their skills on professional area. This course focuses on the professional correspondence, letter documents, office paperwork and communication in business (Paltridge, 2012). The curriculum vitae discussion is one of material that included in English for Office design as the material, because it is relevance with the student's career in the future that related in workplace. Through this document the students' can explore their self-development that can be described as the personal performance. English for Specific Purposes instruction should be designed to address learners' communicative needs within particular professional and occupational contexts. So, it is important for the EFL students to prepare the good writing skill in make the Curriculum Vitae as the document in job area.

Linguistic problems in EFL writing generally involve difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. The grammatical errors are common among EFL learners due to differences between the target language and the learners' first language (Brown, 2000). Errors related to tense usage and subject–verb agreement frequently occur in formal writing contexts. An error analysis provides insights into learners' language development by identifying systematic patterns of linguistic inaccuracies.

From the previous studies in EFL writing dominantly focused on Academic genres such as essay, reports, and etc. From Curriculum Vitae, it received limited attention for the professional document (Hyland, 2004; Swales, 1990). Previous studies indicate that EFL students often struggle with professional genres due to limited exposure to authentic workplace texts (Paltridge, 2012). On other article discussion is about how to write or analyze the written structure meanwhile on this research has purpose finding the students' performance in examining the linguistic problems in curriculum vitae written by EFL Students. It is within the context of an English for Office Course.

Therefore, this study has aimed to examine language-related difficulties found in curriculum vitae written by EFL students presented in the English for Office course. By

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analyzing the students' written documents, this research investigates how language is used in the preparation of curriculum vitae as professional office documents. By focusing on grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, this research provides practical insights for improving professional writing instruction in EFL contexts and supports the development of more effective English for Office pedagogy. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following research question: What lingusitic problems found related to grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics are found in curriculum vitae by EFL students in English for Ofiice course in English study program at Institut Az Zuhra?.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilized a descriptive qualitative approach using document analysis as the primary research method. Document analysis is considered appropriate for examining linguistic features and identifying recurring language problems in written texts without intervening with research variables (Creswell, 2014).

The participants of this study consisted of 15 third-semester students in the English Education study program at Institut Az Zuhra, who were taking English for Office Course. The participants were selected based on the instruction related to professional writing and were required to produce a curricukum viate as the component of the course assessment. The document analyzed in this study were 15 curriculum vitae documents written in English by the participants. The documents were selected based on the following criteria: the curriculum vitae were original works produced individually by the student; the documents were written in English, and the curriculum vitae followed the standard format of a professional curriculum vitae based instruction in the course syllabus. All collected documents met these criteria were therefore included in the analysis.

The data analysis was conducted through several systematic steps. First, all curriculum vitae doucments were read repeatedly to gain overall understanding of the content. Second, linguistic problems identified in the documents were carefully marked and recorded. Third, the identified problems were classified into three predetermined categories: grammar, vocabulary and mechanis, based on established linguistic theories. Finally the frequency of each category was calculated to determine the most dominant types of linguistic problems found in the students' curriculum vitae.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the identification and classification of linguistic problems were guided by established theories of English grammar, vocabulary use, and mechanics. Clearly defined categories and consistent

coding procedures were applied throughout the analysis. All documents were analyzed repeatedly at different times to ensure consistency in identifying and classifying linguistic problems. In addition, the calculation of error frequency was conducted to reduce subjectivity and strengthen the dependability of the findings. Detailed examples of linguistic problems are presented in the findings section to support the data transparency.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analyze, the findings shows from the analysis of students' curriculum vitae written by EFL students in third semester that take in an English for Office course revealed kind of linguistic problems refers to three main categoriesas shown in table 1: grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Grammafical problems were the most frequent (50%), followed by vocabulary-related problem (35%) and mechanical errors (15%). These problems were identified through careful examination of students' written documents and classified based on their linguistic characteristics (Lestari, 2025). These findings indicated that students still have difficultied in producing linguistically accurate proffesional documents in English for Office.

Table 1. Categories of Linguistic Problems Found in Students' Curriculum Vitae

No	Linguistic	Frequency	Percentage
1	Grammar	45	50.0
2	Vocabulary	32	35.0
3	Mechanics	23	15.0
Total		100	100

Source: Authors' results

The main problem of linguistic issue in students' curriculum vitae written is happened in grammatical errors. Subject-verb agreement and incorrect verb tense were the most commonly observed errors found. A lot of students used the present tense to talk about past jobs and schooling, which is not fit with the time sequence. The students also only focus on the year time and mention the simple of sentence whether choose the long words to describe the point. It can be found as the error in grammatically choosen, for example, students often wrote things like "*I work as an administration staff in 2020*" when they should have written "*I worked as an administration staff in 2020*". These kinds of mistakes show they don't really get how important it is to be grammatically correct when writing professional documents. This finding is supported by current studies that say that grammatical correctness is still hard for people learning English as a Foreign language, especially when writing formal and work-related documents (Alhaysony &

Alhaisoni, 2017; Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

In addition, the influence of students' first language may contribute to these grammatical problems. In Indonesian, verb forms do not change according to tense, which may lead students to transfer this linguistic feature into English writing. Students' limited awareness of the functional role of tense usage in professional documents. Many students tended to focus on listing experiences chronologically without adjusting verb forms to reflect past events accurately. This suggests that students may understand grammatical rules in isolation but struggle to apply them appropriately in contextualized professional writing (Nernere, 2025).

Table 2. Types of Grammatical Problems in Students' Curriculum Vitae

No	Type of Grammatical problem	Example found	Frequency
1	Incorrect tenses usage	I work as a leader in 2020	26
2	Subject-verb agreement	I has a good communication	17
3	Missing component	I professional	7
Total			50

Source: Authors' results

The Error in subject-verb agreement were noticed frequently, particularly in sentences that described responsibilities and skills. These grammar issues make curriruclum vitae less clear and believable, which could make employers think poorly of them. According to Lee and Tajino (2020), if professional documents contain grammatical errors, it often suggests that the person lacks sufficient language skills and could make it harder for students to find work.

Furthermore, students' tendency to prioritize content over accuracy may also explain the high frequency of grammatical errors. When writing curriculum vitae, students often focus on conveying information concisely rather than ensuring grammatical correctness, which may reduce their attention to sentence structure and agreement rules. The consistent and focused feedback plays a crucial role in improving learners' grammatical accuracy in second language writing. Many students tended to focus on listing experiences chronologically without adjusting verb forms to reflect past events accurately. This suggests that students may understand grammatical rules in isolation but struggle to apply them appropriately in contextualized professional writing.

Table 3. Types of Vocabulary Problems Found in Students' Curriculum Vitae

No	Type of Vocabulary problem	Example found	Frequency
1	Inappropriate word choice	Follow volunteer	15
2	Informal expression	I am gonna apply	11

| 3 | Literal Translation | Build competition | 9 |
| Total | | | 35 |

The second most issue that happened frequently is about vocabulary can seen in table 3. These problems mostly had to do with using the wrong words and using casual language that ia not appropriate and match for professional writing. Many students used direct translations from their first language, which led to awkward or unnatural English phrases As the Example, instead of using more appropriate terms like *"participated in activities"* or *"organizational involvement,"* phrases like *"join activity/volunteer"* or *"follow organization"* were often used. This discovery suggests that students did not have enough experience with real-world professional vocabulary that is typically used in Curriculum Vitae.

Recent research points out that EFL learners frequently struggle with picking the right professional words because they aren't very familiar with the way people talk in the workplace (Chan, 2021; Hyland & Shaw, 2021). In the context of English for Office courses, mastering vocabulary is very important in helping students create their professional identity through writing. Students may struggle to build and communicate their qualifications in Curriculum Vitae if they do not have enough knowledge of vocabulary.

Another contributing factor is the lack of familiarity with genre-specific language. Curriculum vitae require concise, formal, and action-oriented vocabulary; however, students appeared to apply general English expressions rather than professional lexical items. This indicates that students may not have fully developed genre awareness of CV writing conventions.

Table 4. Types of Mechanical Problems Found in Students' Curriculum Vitae

No	Type of Vocabulary problem	Example found	Frequency
1	Spelling Error	profil	7
2	Capitalization error	Name of school	5
3	Punctuation error	Not use comma	3
Total			15

The last part for concerning in the students' curriculum vitae is from mechanical problems such as incorrect capitalization, punctuation errors, and spelling errors were also found. Even though these errors didn't happen as often as grammar and vocabulary problems, they greatly lowered the documents' overall quality and professionalism. The error can be happened in spelling mistake such as "profil" instead

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of "profile" and not consistent when put the capitalization in important headings such as name of school or public place/work. These results are consistent with recent research that indicates that EFL students frequently undervalue mechanical accuracy, despite its significance in professional writing (Haris & Rani, 2025; Raheem & Ghafar, 2024).

These errors may occur because students tend to underestimate the importance of mechanics in professional writing. In many cases, students appeared to assume that minor mechanical mistakes would not significantly impact the effectiveness of their documents (Yuliawati, 2021). Even little mechanical errors can create unfavorable impressions and diminish the likelihood that a CV will be shortlisted in professional situations. As Hyland and Wong (2023) pointed out, employers typically equate mechanical accuracy with professionalism and attention to detail. Overall, the findings indicate that English for Office instruction should provide more explicit guidance on linguistic accuracy and professional writing conventions. Integrating model texts and focused feedback may help students improve their curriculum vitae writing skills.

Overall, these findings suggest that linguistic errors in students' curriculum vitae are influenced by a combination of limited grammatical control, insufficient professional vocabulary exposure, first-language interference, and low awareness of genre-specific conventions. Therefore, English for Office instruction should not only emphasize content development but also explicitly address linguistic accuracy and professional writing norms. Providing model CV texts, raising genre awareness, and offering focused feedback on language use may help students reduce recurring errors and improve the quality of their professional documents.

CONCLUSION

This study examined linguistic problems found in curriculum vitae written by EFL students enrolled in an English for Office course. The findings revealed that grammatical errors were the most dominant problems, particularly related to verb tense usage and subject–verb agreement, followed by vocabulary-related issues such as inappropriate word choice and the use of informal expressions, as well as mechanical errors including spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. These findings indicate that although students are able to present their qualifications and experiences, they still face considerable challenges in producing linguistically accurate and professionally appropriate curriculum vitae.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the data were collected from a relatively small number of participants (15 students) from a single English

Education program at one institution, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the analysis focused solely on one type of professional document, namely curriculum vitae, and did not include other forms of professional writing. Third, the study relied exclusively on document analysis and did not incorporate students' perspectives or instructional observations, which may have provided deeper insights into the causes of the identified linguistic problems.

Based on these limitations, future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample across different institutions to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Further studies may also examine other professional genres, such as cover letters, business emails, reports, and internal office documents, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of EFL students' professional writing abilities. In the next future research may explore other professional genres such as cover letters ,business emails and office work documents.

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