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Common Language Errors in Research Manuscripts

Greg Adams

Managing Editor, FORTE Inc.

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Goals of today's seminar

- Identify 3 types of language errors
- Give real examples of each type
- Improve your chances of publication

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Important note to keep in mind

Obvious errors stop manuscripts *before* review

The *most critical* components of your submission:

Title

Abstract

Cover letter

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Language errors

Common grammar errors:

Subject/Verb Agreement

"anodized wafers were rinsed in deionized water"

"each anodized wafer was rinsed in deionized water"

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Language errors

Common grammar errors:

Subject/Verb Agreement

"diffusion coefficients have been calculated for each model…"

"a diffusion coefficient has been calculated for each model…"

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Language errors

Common grammar errors:

Subject/Verb Agreement

In academic writing, “data” is plural

“The data show that…”

“Data were analyzed by…”

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Language errors

Common grammar errors:

Prepositions

"No significant difference between the BH1 and BH2 sites was observed"

"There were no significant differences among the BH1, BH2 and BH3 sites."

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Language errors

Common grammar errors:

Prepositions

"measurements were collected at 1 hr"

"measurements were collected for 1 hr"

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Language errors

Common grammar errors:

Hyphenation

“the filament was 10 mm long”

“…using a 10-mm filament”

Language errors

Common grammar errors:

Hyphenation

“...interviewees were all 35 years old.”

“interviews of 35-year-old scientists revealed…”

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Language errors

Common grammar errors:

Hyphenation

For numbers, the style is consistent from 21 to 99

“twenty-one” ➔ “ninety-nine”

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Language errors

Word choice errors:

Respectively

“The values were 176 mm and 198 mm, respectively.” **X**

“The values for the AC-powered devices and the DC-powered devices were 176 mm and 198 mm, respectively.” ✓

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Language errors

Word choice errors:

Respectively

"The values were 176 mm and 198 mm, respectively." **X**

"The values for the AC-powered devices and the DC-powered devices were 176 mm and 198 mm, respectively." ✓

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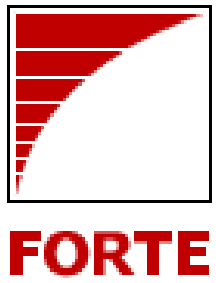
Language errors

Word choice errors:

Relatively

"The proposed method has relatively high resolution." X

"The proposed method has a relatively high resolution of 0.001 nm, which is an order of magnitude higher than conventional methods, such as…" ✓



Language errors

Word choice errors:

Relatively

"The proposed method has relatively high resolution." **X**

"The proposed method has a relatively high resolution of 0.001 nm, which is an order of magnitude higher than conventional methods, such as…" ✓

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Language errors

Word choice errors:

Vague terms

"…are important in medicine, optics, computing, etc." X

"...are important in fields such as medicine, optics, and computing" ✓

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Language errors

Word choice errors:

Vague terms

"…has been observed in the Bismarck, Cortland, and Empire cultivars, among others." X

"…has been observed in several cultivars, including" Bismarck, Cortland, and Empire. ✓

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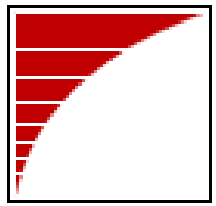
Language errors

Word choice errors:

Unnecessary words

As a result of…	Consequently…
The majority of…	Most…
At this point in time…	Now… (Currently…)
Due to the fact that…	Because…
With the exception of…	Except…
It is possible that…	May…
At the same time as…	Concurrently…
In light of the fact that…	Since…



Language errors

Word choice errors:

Unnecessary words

Title: **Full Title** *(Limit 250 characters)*

Abstract: *Limit 500 words*

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Language errors

Word choice errors:

Close words

staff	stuff
rupture	rapture
region	lesion
fetal	fatal

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Language errors

Style/format problems:

Non-English characters

“samples stored at -20℃ or -70℃ for 1, 6, and 12 months”

“increased from 21.6±4.84% to 25.3±4.46% (p＜0.02)”

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Language errors

Style/format problems:

Non-English characters

Always include a space between numbers and units

“27.5 kg” **“890 cm^3”** **“3 ml”**

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Language errors

Style/format problems:

Table and figure order

Figures and Tables must be cited in order

e.g. Fig. 1 must be described before Fig. 2

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Language errors

Style/format problems:

Table and figure order

Even figure panels should be described in order

Discuss Fig. 1(a) before 1(b)

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Language errors

Style/format problems:

In-text citations

Most commonly, citations should be in numerical order

e.g. Reference 7 must be cited before Reference 8

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Language errors

Style/format problems:

In-text citations

Citations must follow the style of your target journal

…solar cells [1]. vs. ...solar cells. [1]

…solar cells[1)]. vs. ...solar cells.[1)]

…solar cells[1]. vs. ...solar cells.[1]

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Language errors

Style/format problems:

Inconsistencies

Abbreviations should be defined at the first instance of a term in the abstract and again in the manuscript

e.g., time-of-flight mass spectrometry (TOF-MS)

After that, only the abbreviation should be used

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Language errors

Style/format problems:

Inconsistencies

Provide manufacturer/model/developer information for all instruments and software

At first mention, provide details in full, e.g., “(Agilent Technologies, Santa Clara, CA)

After that, just “(Agilent Technologies)”

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Review

Common Language Errors:

Grammar errors

-Subject/Verb Agreement
-Prepositions
-Hyphenation

Word choice errors

-Respectively
-Relatively
-Vague terms
-Unnecessary words
-Close words

Style/format problems

-Non-English characters
-Table and figure order
-In-text citations
-Inconsistencies

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Goals of today's seminar

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Q&Aセッション

本日はフォルテのオンラインセミナーにご参加いただき、誠にありがとうございます。

これより、セミナーの内容についてご質問を承ります。
『チャット機能』をご利用いただき、質問内容を英語で
ご入力の上、送信してください。

時間内に全ての質問に回答できない場合、後ほどEメールにて回答いたします。

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