

Indonesian to English

Most Frequent Mistakes and How To Avoid Them

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Indonesian to English – Introduction

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Born in 1961—Dutch—studied philosophy at Utrecht University—
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magazines and websites, mostly about design, culture and science—
moved to Indonesia 15 years ago—copy editor for ITB Journal since
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Science



Indonesian to English – Science

Science (1)

Science is a collective process to find out how the world works and how that knowledge can be used.

It resembles the open-source approach in coding in that it is fundamentally decentralized, largely self-organizing, and guided by strict rules and standards.

Indonesian to English – Science

Science (2)

Crucial to this process is the scientific method, which distinguishes it from other forms of knowledge gathering.

The scientific method has evolved over four centuries and is very robust when applied properly.

Indonesian to English – Science

Science (3)

An important part of the scientific method is reporting your work as a scientist to make your findings public and to enable your method and your conclusions to be checked by other scientists.

Scientific publications are also used to validate studies and to measure their success.

Academic Writing



Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

Academic Writing

Academic writing is different from writing for other purposes. It should reflect the norms of science.

This is not an abstract principle. It can be expressed in practical guidelines, such as the following checklist from [Scribbr.com](https://www.scribbr.com).

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

Checklist (1)

- I avoid informal terms and contractions.
- I avoid second-person pronouns (“you”).
- I avoid emotive or exaggerated language.
- I avoid redundant words and phrases.

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

Checklist (2)

- I avoid unnecessary jargon and define terms where needed.
- I present information as precisely and accurately as possible.
- I use appropriate transitions to show the connections between my ideas.
- My text is logically organized using paragraphs.

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

Checklist (3)

- Each paragraph is focused on a single idea, expressed in a clear topic sentence.
- Every part of the text relates to my central thesis or research question.
- I support my claims with evidence.
- I use the appropriate verb tenses in each section.

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

Checklist (4)

- I consistently use either UK or US English.
- I format numbers consistently.
- I cite my sources using a consistent citation style.

Source: *www.scribbr.com/academic-writing/*

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

Style Guides

Each journal uses a specific style guide, which gives you detailed rules for composing and formatting your text.

They concern, among others, spelling (UK English or US English), typography, reference format, etc.

Always follow these rules carefully.

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

The Writing Process (1)

Writing—especially academic writing in a language that is not your own—is not easy if you are not used to it.

What makes speaking easier, is that it is less permanent and there is an audience you are addressing.

It can be helpful when you are writing to imagine a specific person to represent your audience.

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

The Writing Process (2)

- Start with the right motivation
Be proud to present your work.
- Try to write (and think) directly in English
Rather than translate.

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

The Writing Process (3)

- It's scientific reporting, not literature
Be precise, concise and meticulous.
- Avoid complications
Break up complex sentences into separate sentences.

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

The Writing Process (4)

- Take your time
Because it takes time.
- Practice makes (more) perfect
The more you write, the better you get at it.

Indonesian to English – Academic Writing

Useful Tools

Microsoft Word > Spelling and Grammar

- Editor
- Synonyms
- Track Changes

Google Translate

Google Search

Websites with English grammar advice

Indonesian to English

Most Frequent Mistakes




Indonesian to English – Most Frequent Mistakes

In a scientific context, it should be possible to express exactly the same things in Indonesian and in English.

There are differences in the way each language works that frequently cause mistakes.

Indonesian to English – Most Frequent Mistakes

Five main issues

- ① Mistakes with respect to **articles** | *a/an/the*
- ② Mistakes with respect to **singular**  **plural**
- ③ Mistakes with respect to **word order** | of adjectives and adverbs
- ④ Mistakes with respect to **time** | *present tense, past tense, etc.*
- ⑤ Mistakes with respect to **prepositions** | *in, over, at, out, etc.*

Indonesian to English ① Articles

① Articles

In English, there are two articles: *the* and *a* (or *an*).

“The” refers to a specific individual thing or person.

“A” (or “an”) refers to *any* individual thing or person.

“The” is translated into Indonesian by adding *-nya* after the noun.

“A” translated into Indonesian as *sebuah* or *suatu*.

Articles are often mixed up or missing. This may sometimes not be a problem in Indonesian, but in English it usually is.

Indonesian to English ① Articles

In some cases you do not use an article in English.

For example, when no quantity is specified
(when in singular you would use *a/an*):

“There are no limits”

“A room filled with people”

Or in cases such as:

“Teach biology” (scientific subject)

“Speak English” (language), etc.

Indonesian to English ② Singular and Plural

② **Singular & plural**

In Indonesian, if the context tells you that you are referring to more than one thing or one person, then there is no strict need to use plural.

English does not let you get away with this.

For example:

“Ada batasan” can be translated as:

“There are limits”, but also as *“There is a limit”*

Indonesian to English ③ Word Order

③ Word order [of adjectives & adverbs]

Adjectives

In English adjectives precede the noun they belong to.
In Indonesian it is the other way around.

Adverbs

Adverbs follow the verb or adjective they belong to in both languages. However, in English there are exceptions when they precede the verb or adjective.

Indonesian to English ③ Word Order | Adjectives

A related error is using the adjective as a noun.

For example:

*“Average body weight (ABW) is used to express fitness.
An individual’s **average** is a good indicator of physical
health.”*

When it should be:

*“An individual’s **body weight** is a good indicator of physical
health.”*

Indonesian to English ③ Word Order | Adverbs

In English adverbs are an adjective followed by *-ly* (in most cases).

For example:

“She uses correct {adverb} spelling.”

“She spells correctly {adjective}.”

In Indonesian there is no visible difference between adjectives and adverbs.

This can lead to an adverb being used as an adjective, or the other way around.

Indonesian to English ④ Time

④ Time

In English the verb is conjugated to indicate past tense.

In Indonesian a proposition is used (*tadi, kemarin, besok*), but the verb remains unchanged.

Indonesian to English ④ Time

Make sure you are consistent in the usage of past or present tense.

Consider this mistake:

“The experiment was set up to test the validity of our model. First, we created a simulated environment. Then we move the object into its starting position.”

We expect “moved” {past tense} but instead we get “move” {present tense}.

Indonesian to English ④ Time

A scientific paper reports a research that has been conducted.

Referring to the research activities that were carried out, for example an experiment or the development of a model, you use past tense.

Describing a standard procedure you use present tense, for example regarding the preparation of experimental materials.

Describing the application of mathematical formulas you use present tense.

Indonesian to English ④ Time

A tricky subset is formed by the words *could*, *would*, *might*, and *should*. They are the past tenses of the verbs *can*, *will*, *may* and *shall*, respectively. But they are often used to express a degree of uncertainty.

For example:

If you write: “*The results **could** be called statistically significant*”

This should be interpreted as: “***Maybe** the results can be called statistically significant*”

Therefore write: “*The results **can** be called statistically significant*”

Indonesian to English ⑤ Prepositions

⑤ **Prepositions** [to, on, up, with, about, etc.]

Mistakes with regard to prepositions are the hardest to prevent. They can only be prevented by knowing what preposition to use in a given case.

Certain prepositions always go with certain verbs and using any other would be incorrect. In this case, English does not differ from Indonesian.

Indonesian to English ⑤ Prepositions

Sometimes there are different options that are correct, without changing the meaning.

For example, compared *to* and compared *with*.

Sometimes, using a different proposition changes the meaning.

For example, fly *in* and fly *into*.

Sometimes similar words have a different or no preposition.

For example, consisting *of* and comprising {no proposition}.
seen *as* and considered {no proposition} .

Indonesian to English – Miscellaneous Issues

Miscellaneous Issues

- Acronyms vs. proper names
- Titles vs. captions
- ‘Paper’ vs. ‘research’
- ‘Many’ vs. ‘several’
- ‘Similar’ vs. ‘the same’
- ‘Including’/‘such as’ vs. ‘comprising’
- Stopgaps – ‘also’ (**juga**), ‘still’ (**masih**), ‘not yet’ (**belum**)

Example



Questions & Answers

