



## Analysis of punctuation error in one author of alternate universe on Twitter

Jumyanti and Ernie D. A. Imperiani

*English Language and Literature Program, Faculty of Language and Literature Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Jl. Dr. Setiabudhi No. 229, Isola, Sukasari, Bandung, West Java, Indonesia*  
junnyyp89@upi.edu, ernie\_imperiani@upi.edu

### ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the punctuation errors found in the three Alternate Universes (AUs) titles belonging to one author on Twitter. Particularly, this study aims to determine what types of errors appear in the three AUs and what factors cause the errors. The data for this study were obtained from the author's Twitter account entitled *Happy Birthday, Kai, Celebrity Crush, and Illustrious*. Furthermore, the study used a qualitative case study design to identify the punctuation errors found in AU on Twitter and the types of errors by using the theory of Burt et al. (1982). Meanwhile, the factors of occurrence of errors were examined by using the theory of Brown (1994). The results revealed that the author made three types of errors: omission, addition, and misinformation. The most dominant type that appeared was omission 19 times. Then, these three types of errors arise due to 2 factors: the intralingual error factor and the context of learning factor. Nevertheless, these three AUs still have many readers and receive many likes. However, correct punctuation is considered necessary because it can affect the reader's understanding.

**Keywords:** Alternate Universe; punctuation error; Twitter

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### INTRODUCTION

Punctuation has an important role in conveying messages of what the author intends. According to (Kirkman, 2006), punctuation marks are helpful for showing grammatical relationships between words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. Punctuation also indicates tone, adjusts speed, emphasizes certain words, and gives meaning to words. Punctuation is important to help the reader to understand the reading well.

However, we often find punctuation errors in writing, leading to misunderstandings by the readers because punctuation errors can change the true meaning of a sentence. In addition, the reader cannot hear the author's voice while reading the text. Therefore, to understand the reading, punctuation is needed to signal emphasis and emotion and give color to the writing. Not only that, punctuation errors can make the words on the page make strange statements that make the reader laugh at the author's expense (Kirkman, 2006). Thus, it is necessary to understand the use of correct punctuation to convey messages through writing so that readers understand the meaning in accordance with the author's intent. Punctuation errors can not only be found in the book's text, but we can find it in writing on social media,

especially Twitter. Twitter is a platform that we can use to communicate and write down ideas, feelings, or experiences. Nowadays, Twitter is also often used to display the creativity of its users in writing stories, one of which is writing alternate universe (AU). According to Your Dictionary (2022), the alternate universe is a term used for a hypothetical world located in a different dimension of space and time from the real world experienced by humans. While on Twitter, the term AU refers to a fictional story written by someone about a particular character.

Several previous studies have identified the analysis of punctuation and grammatical errors (e.g., Ali et al., 2020; Amelia et al., 2018; Faiza et al., 2020; Husada et al., 2018; Isnaeni & Datang, 2017; Sain et al., 2022; Sihotang et al., 2021; Sülükçü & Kirboğa, 2020; Tumanggor et al., 2021; Yuliah et al., 2020). Sain et al. (2022) focused on analyzing the punctuation errors of young adults on their Instagram stories. This study found ten kinds of punctuation errors. The dominant punctuation errors in young adults' Instagram stories are exclamation marks, as much as 40.1%.

Furthermore, some studies focused on punctuation errors in academic field such as Ali, Amin, and Ishtiaq, (2020), Amelia et al., (2018),

Husada et al. (2018), Isnaeni and Datang (2017) and Sülükçü and Kirboğa, (2020). Ali et al. (2020) and Husada et al. (2018) investigated the types of punctuation errors made by students in writing. The studies found that the most common errors that occur in student's writing are incorrect commas, apostrophes, and capitalization. Amelia et al. (2018) also explored the types of errors in the use of punctuation in narrative texts in the second grade of SMA Negeri 1Makassar. This study found several errors made by students, namely misordering, omission, and addition of punctuation. Sülükçü and Kirboğa (2020) investigated the use of punctuation by first-year students of Turkish language courses students whose mother tongue is Turkish. This study found that students made some errors in almost all types of punctuation. The students who made the most mistakes when using hyphens were 98.34%, and the fewest errors found were the use of periods. Isnaeni and Datang (2017) identified the types of punctuation errors made by students in terms of the Taxonomy of Surface Strategies in their narrative writing. This study shows that several students make punctuation errors in terms of omission, addition, substitution, and misplacement.

Meanwhile, Faiza et al. (2020), Sihotang et al. (2021), Tumanggor et al. (2021), and Yuliah et al. (2020) were interested more on investigated grammatical errors on social media. Tumanggor et al. (2021) investigated the analysis of grammatical errors made by students of the Medan State Polytechnic majoring in computer engineering on social media. This study found that the most dominant grammatical error was misinformation. In addition, Faiza et al. (2020) and analyzed grammatical errors on social media, and these two studies found that the most dominant error found in posts on social media was an omission. Faiza et al. (2020) analyzed grammatical errors on K-pop tweets and found many omissions of helping verbs, subjects, and punctuation. Sihotang et al. (2021) also found that one of the factors for grammatical errors was a lack of English knowledge. Moreover, Yuliah et al. (2020) analyzed the grammatical errors in the social media captions of Eigerindo's products. This study found 84 grammatical errors, including 36% errors in subject-verb agreement, 19% errors in sentence fragments, 17% errors in spelling, 13% errors in parallelism, 9% errors in prepositions, and 6% errors in passive voice. It can be concluded that subject-verb agreement is the most common error in the social media captions of Eigerindo's products.

However, the previous studies above only showed little intention or had not elaborated the analysis of punctuation errors on social media, especially on Twitter. Also, the five studies above such as Ali et al. (2020), Amelia, Ampa, & Ilmiah, (2018), Husada et al. (2018), Isnaeni and Datang

(2017) and Sülükçü and Kirboğa, (2020). examine texts related to the academic field and have not conducted research in the field of entertainment. Meanwhile, Faiza et al. (2020), Sihotang et al. (2021), Tumanggor et al. (2021), and Yuliah et al. (2020) only focus on analyzing grammatical errors in the social media.

Thus, this paper aims to analyze the punctuation errors in AU on Twitter, whose author does not use English as the first language. The author of the AU studied in this paper is a student majoring in physics with an intermediate level of English. The author has written approximately 21 AUs and received hundreds of likes, proving that her AU has been read and liked by many people.

Therefore, punctuation error analysis is considered necessary because it will affect the level of understanding of many readers. Thus, it is hoped that this paper can contribute to the awareness of other AU writers about the use of correct punctuation so that the stories told at AU can be understood by readers well. To analyze the punctuation errors, the researcher uses the theory from Burt et al. (1982) about types of errors supported by the theory from Brown (1994) to analyze factors of punctuation error.

## **Theories**

### ***Punctuation***

Giving punctuation according to the intended meaning is what "good writers" do (Dawkins, 1995). Punctuation has the same important role as words, structure, and meaning contained in a text. If one of these elements is missing, it becomes difficult for the writing to become complete, and the meaning conveyed will not be clear (Ali et al., 2020; Amelia et al., 2018; Husada et al., 2018; Isnaeni & Datang, 2017; Sülükçü & Kirboğa, 2020).

In his book, Kirkman (2006) explains that there are 13 types of punctuation marks, including apostrophe, colon, comma, dash, ellipsis points, exclamation mark, full stop, hyphens, quotation marks, parentheses, question mark, semi-colon, and slash. Each punctuation mark has its function, but broadly speaking, there are two punctuation functions, according to Kirkman (2006), one is grammatical, and the other is rhetorical. The grammatical function is to show the boundaries between segments and how they relate to each other, while the rhetorical function is to show the emphasis or tone we want to give to a word or group of words. Isnaeni and Datang (2017) also explained the function of punctuation marks as traffic signs for readers. Punctuation marks can help readers see grammatical structures, meanings, and rhetorical relationships to understand the meaning clearly.

### *Types of punctuation errors*

Burt et al. (1982) explained four types of punctuation errors. There are omissions, addition, misinformation and disorder.

#### Omission

The type of omission can be found in sentences that do not have punctuation marks that should appear. For example:

Wrong: He gave expensive beautiful flowers.

Correct: He gave expensive, beautiful flowers.

#### Addition

The opposite of omission is addition. The addition is marked by the appearance of punctuation marks that should not appear. For example:

Wrong: They always eat juicy, chicken meat.

Correct: They always eat juicy chicken meat.

#### Misinformation

Misinformation is characterized by the use of incorrect punctuation in a sentence. For example:

Wrong: He didn't lie, He bought his book at Gramedia.

Correct: He didn't lie. He bought his book at Gramedia.

#### Misorder

Misorder is characterized by the incorrect placement of punctuation in a sentence. For example:

Wrong: The things I want to have are: happiness, health, and success.

Correct: The things I want to have are the following: happiness, health, and success.

#### *Factors of punctuation errors*

According to Burt, Dulay, & Krashen (1982), errors occur are due to fatigue, lack of attention and lack of knowledge of language rules. Usually, fatigue and inattention factors can be related to each other. Our focus becomes less when the body or mind is in bad condition. Therefore, this can cause the author to misplace or even skip the use of punctuation. The other factor is the lack of knowledge of language rules. This factor is usually caused by the author's lack of knowledge about the rules for using punctuation in specific languages.

Brown (1994) divided error factors into four categories. The first is an interlingual error. Interlingual error is the most significant error made by learners and is closely related to the original language. The second factor is an intralingual error. This factor occurs due to misunderstanding the target language being studied. Learners usually ignore the actual rules in this factor, causing some errors, including omitting or adding elements in a sentence. The third factor is the context of learning. In this factor, students can make errors because of the wrong and inaccurate concepts taught by the teacher in class.

Indirectly, teachers encourage students to make the same errors. The last factor is communication strategies. On this factor, students usually produce their learning styles to communicate their messages. In the end, a technique like this can be one of the factors of error.

Meanwhile, Zulkifli (2015) explained several factors for errors in placing punctuation. First is the lack of accuracy in identifying punctuation marks, which can cause author to remove or add punctuation marks. The second is a lack of knowledge about the function of the punctuation mark; for example, the author may not know to use a comma before the quotation marks. The last is the lack of understanding of the meaning of the text. This factor can cause the author to misplace the punctuation marks, leading to different meanings. From the factors mentioned above, Ali et al. (2020), Amelia et al. (2018), and Husada et al. (2018) agree that English-speaking writers need to understand the function and significance of punctuation.

#### **Previous studies**

Several studies have identified error analysis in writing. Ali et al. (2020) and Husada et al. (2018) investigated the types of punctuation errors made by students in writing. The studies found that the most common errors that occur in student's writing are incorrect commas, apostrophes, and capitalization. Amelia et al. (2018) also explored the types of errors in the use of punctuation in narrative texts in the second grade of SMA Negeri 1 Makassar. This study found several errors made by students, namely misordering, omission, and addition of punctuation. Sülükçü and Kirboğa (2020) investigated the use of punctuation by first-year students of Turkish language courses students whose mother tongue is Turkish. This study found that students made some errors in almost all types of punctuation. The students who made the most mistakes when using hyphens were 98.34%, and the fewest errors found were the use of periods.

Furthermore, some studies focused on grammatical errors in social media. Faiza et al. (2020) analyzed grammatical errors in K-pop tweets and found many omissions of helping verbs, subjects, and punctuation. Sihotang et al. (2021) also found that one of the factors for grammatical errors was a lack of English knowledge. Moreover, Yuliah et al. (2020) analyzed the grammatical errors in the social media captions of Eigerindo's products. This study found 84 grammatical errors, including 36% errors in subject-verb agreement, 19% errors in sentence fragments, 17% errors in spelling, 13% errors in parallelism, 9% errors in prepositions, and 6% errors in passive voice. It can be concluded that subject-verb agreement is the most common error in the social media captions of Eigerindo's products.

Previous studies above discussed the punctuation and grammatical errors in writing text. However, this paper aims to analyze the punctuation errors in social media texts, especially on Twitter.

## METHOD

### Research design

The current study used a qualitative case study design to identify the punctuation error found in AU on Twitter. A qualitative case study is a study in which a researcher wants to examine areas where there is an individual or are only a few people who understand some phenomenon, situation, group and community (Kumar, 2010). The AU under study belongs to one of the authors who does not use English as her first language. The researcher used a qualitative case study design to provide a better and more in-depth understanding of the problem under study.

### Data source and context

To achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher used secondary sources by retrieving data from Twitter. The research data were taken from three AUs written by one authors on Twitter. The three AUs are *Happy Birthday*, *Kai*, *Celebrity Crush*, and *Illustrious*. These three AU's were chosen as research objects because they have the most reads and receive the most likes among other AU's written by the same author. In addition, the term AU on Twitter refers to a fictional story written by someone about a particular character.

### Data collection method

Data collection was obtained through several stages. Firstly, the researcher contacted the author of the AUs to be studied. Secondly, the researcher explained the purpose of the research to the author and interviewed the author regarding her identity and work. Then, the researcher chose three AUs that fit the research objectives. The three selected AUs are the parts of the AU that are most read and liked by readers

### Data analysis

The researcher used content analysis to analyze research findings accurately. Content analysis was

**Table 1**

*The recapitulation of error type*

No	Error type	Frequency of Errors	Percentages of Errors
1.	Addition	7	25%
2.	Omission	19	67.9%
3.	Misinformation	2	7.1%
4.	Misorder	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

used because the researcher focused on the AU text. Thus, content analysis can be a great guide to direct the researcher to analyze the information contained in the AU (Kumar, 2010). Data analysis was carried out through several stages. Firstly, the researcher identified each sentence that used punctuation marks. Secondly, the researcher categorizes each punctuation error into several categories of punctuation error types by using the theory from Burt et al. (1982). Then, the researcher analyzed the factors of punctuation errors using the theory of Brown (1994). Finally, the researcher counted the number of punctuation errors and drew conclusions.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based The findings reveal the punctuation errors in the three AUs entitled *Happy Birthday*, *Kai*, *Celebrity Crush*, and *Illustrious* by employing the theory from Burt et al. (1982). The punctuation errors which appeared in the three titles were omission, addition, and misinformation. The emergence of punctuation errors was due to two factors: the intralingual error factor and the context of learning factor (Brown, 1994). Further detailed explanation on each finding is discussed in the following part.

### Types of punctuation errors

According to Burt, Dulay, and Krashen (1982), errors are categorized into four types: omission, addition, misinformation, and misordered. The omission is marked by the absence of punctuation marks that should appear. The opposite of omission, addition is marked by the appearance of punctuation marks that should not appear. Furthermore, misinformation is characterized by the use of incorrect punctuation. For example, the author uses a comma instead of a full stop to separate two independent sentences. The last one is misordered, marked by the wrong placement of punctuation marks. From the four types of errors, this study found three types of errors that appeared in the three AUs.

Based on the table 1, the researcher found that the most frequent punctuation error in the three AUs was an omission that appeared nineteen times. While the addition type appeared seven times, the misinformation type appeared two times, and the researcher did not find disorder type on the three AUs. This result is in line with research conducted by Amelia et al. (2018). The study found that omission was the most dominant error type made by students at SMA NEGERI 1 MAKASSAR, which is 123 times. Isnaeni and Datang (2017) also found that omission was the most common error that occurred to students in narrative writing in recognition and production tests in terms of surface and taxonomy strategies.

### **Omission**

The omission type appears 19 times in all three titles. A total of nine errors appeared on *Celebrity Crush*, five errors on *Happy Birthday, Kai*, and four errors appeared on *Illustrious*. The examples of the omission type are presented below.

*Actually I don't really like strawberry because it tastes too sour.*

In the sentence above, the author omitted the use of commas. According to Kirkman (2006), a comma is used to mark the boundary of a preliminary group at the beginning of a sentence. The use of comma at the beginning of a sentence aims to indicate time, place, manner, reason, or other information. The word *Actually* here is used to signal an explanation of a reason. Thus, the correct sentence should be, *Actually, I don't really like strawberry because it tastes too sour.*

*That's fine, I'll play it instead but you sing for me.*

The sentence above showed the author omitted the comma before the word *but*. Whereas to use that word, the author must add a comma before the word *but*. Therefore, the correct sentence should be, *That's fine, I'll play it instead, but you sing for me.*

*He always says the same things yet I never got bored.*

The author omitted the comma that must be placed before the word *yet* in the sentence above. The same as *but*, to use the word *yet*, the author must put a comma before the word. Therefore, the correct sentence should be, *He always says the same things, yet I never got bored.*

From the second and third examples, it can be seen that the writer omitted the punctuation before using the conjunctions *but* and *yet*. This is contrary to what was stated by Kirkman (2006), that a comma is used between independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction: *but, yet*.

### **Addition**

The addition type appeared one time on *Celebrity Crush*, three errors appeared on *Happy Birthday, Kai*, and three errors appeared on *Illustrious*. The total occurrence of the addition type is seven. The examples of the addition type are discussed below.

*We're not friends, nor a lover.*

The sentence *We are not friends, nor are we lovers* is a complete sentence that does not need to be separated by commas. Adding comma in this sentence makes the sentence look stilted and choppy. Therefore, the correct sentence should be, *We're not friends nor a lover.*

*I'm trembling in my legs a little, because of exhaustion.*

The sentence above showed that the author added an unnecessary comma before the word *because*. The use of *because of* aims to replace the clause *as a result of*, so the author does not need to add a comma in this sentence. The correct sentence should be *I'm trembling in my legs a little because of exhaustion.*

*But for me, there's nothing to be proud of, once you're right to feel it.*

This sentence indicates that the author added unnecessary commas after the word *of*. Using a comma before the word *of* is inappropriate and instead makes the sentence look truncated. The correct sentence should be, *But for me, there's nothing to be proud of once you're right to feel it.*

### **Misinformation**

The type of misinformation appeared two times. One error was found in *Celebrity Crush*, and one was found in *Illustrious*. While on *Happy Birthday, Kai*, the researcher did not find any misinformation type. The example of the misinformation type is presented in the example below:

*You're right, what a shame.*

The sentence above is a combination of two independent clauses. The author must separate the two clauses by a full stop, not a comma. Supported by the theory from Kirkman (2006) states that a full stop is used to mark the end of a sentence. Therefore, the correct sentence should be *You're right. What a shame.*

### **Factors of punctuation errors**

According to Brown (1994), there are four factors that influence the author to make errors, including interlingual errors, intralingual errors, the context of learning, and communication strategies. However, in this study, the researcher only found two factors that

trigger the errors: intralingual errors and the context of learning.

The first is an intralingual error. This factor occurs due to misunderstanding the target language being studied. It can make the author ignore the

actual punctuation rules, causing some errors, including omitting or adding elements in a sentence. The second is the context of learning. This error occurred because the writer received the wrong information while learning about punctuation.

**Table 2**

*The recapitulation of error factors*

No	Error factors	Frequency of Errors factors	Percentages of Errors factors
1.	Intralingual error	26	92.9%
2.	The context of learning	2	7.1%
3.	Interlingual error	0	0%
4.	Communication strategies	0	0%
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table 2 above found that the dominant factor that causes the author to make punctuation errors in the three AUs is the intralingual error factor that appeared twenty-six times. While the context of the learning factor appears two times.

***Intralingual Error***

The intralingual error factor appeared ten times in *Celebrity Crush*, nine times in *Happy Birthday, Kai*, and seven times in *Illustrious*. The example of the Intralingual error factor is discussed in E8 below.

*I was amused by her efforts though.*

In the example sentence above, the author omitted the comma after the word *efforts* and before the word *though*. This error occurs due to the intralingual error factor, where the author often ignores the actual function of punctuation. This is also supported by the fact that the author does not use English as his first language. This makes the author also does not really understand the rules for using punctuation in English. Thus, the correct sentence should be, ‘**I was amused by her efforts, though.**’

***The context of learning***

The researcher found the context of learning factor appeared one time on *Celebrity Crush*, and one time appeared on *Illustrious*. The example of the context of learning factor is presented in E9 below:

*My boyfriend is not an illustrious guy, my boyfriend is Sergio Benjamin.*

In the example above, the author experienced misinformation about the function of commas and full stop. The author used a comma to separate the two clauses, even though the two clauses are independent.

Therefore, the author should use a full stop to separate the two clauses. This error occurs due to the context of the learning factor supported by theory from Brown (1994), where when learning about punctuation, the author received wrong information from the teacher or other sources about the use of punctuation. Thus, the correct sentence should be,

*‘My boyfriend is not an illustrious guy. My boyfriend is Sergio Benjamin.’*

The findings above revealed that the authors of the three titles AU **Happy Birthday, Kai, Celebrity Crush, and Illustrious** made a total of 28 punctuation errors. The errors that appear are identified as omission, addition and misinformation. The errors were caused by two factors, namely the intralingual factors and the context of learning.

**CONCLUSION**

The findings above revealed that the three AUs entitled **Happy Birthday, Kai, Celebrity Crush, and Illustrious** show three types of errors: omission, addition, and misinformation. The omission type is the type that appears the most, namely 19 times. It means that the author was unaware of the punctuation rules, especially in using commas. However, the researcher did not find any error in the misorder type.

The three types of errors occur due to two factors: the intralingual error factor and the context of learning factor. The most dominant factor in the three AUs is the intralingual factor. The intralingual error factor is caused by a misunderstanding about punctuation, so the author usually ignores actual rules, which causes the author to omit or add unnecessary punctuation in a sentence. Meanwhile, the context of the learning factor is caused by the false information the author received when learning about punctuation. This information can be from the teacher in the school or any sources.

From the findings above, it can be concluded that the author made 28 errors in the three AUs caused by two factors. Even though the author made some errors, there are still so many readers who love to read her AUs. However, using correct punctuation is considered necessary because it will affect the level of understanding of many readers. The researcher hopes that in the future, the author can raise their awareness about the use of correct punctuation so that the stories told can be understood by readers well.

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