



Original Research

Analysis of Sentence Types in Affecting College Students' Writing Skill

Barokatul Hidayah, Siska Bochari, & H. Jamiluddin

Tadulako University, Palu, Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received 30 January 2024

Revised 14 March 2024

Accepted 25 May 2024

Keyword

English Writing

Syntax

Sentence Types

Undergraduate

Writing



Abstract

College students are required to complete an undergraduate thesis as part of their final project. However, when addressing the issues students face with their limited vocabulary, their choice of proper grammar, and their syntactical or word class problems, etc., researchers seldom carried out a focused exploration on dominant sentence types. This study aims to identify the most dominant sentence type used by the students in their writing, determine the forms of sentences used within the dominant sentence type, and analyse the factors influencing students' writing. This research used a quantitative descriptive method with an innovative methodological approach, namely a fishbone diagram to analyse the underlying factors. 105 background proposals from 7th semester students in the English Department at Tadulako University participated in this study. A simple random sampling technique was employed, and questionnaires and document analysis were used as instruments to gather data. The data analysis results show that: (1) simple sentences made up the majority of the dominant sentence types used in students' backgrounds; (2) nominal sentences were the second most common form of dominant sentences used by the students; and (3) there are three factors that impact students' writing, particularly regarding sentence types: internal and external factors. The implication of this research is the development of writing skills where sentence types are an essential part of writing. The results can aid students in crafting clear and coherent sentences, specifically how to structure sentences effectively to convey their ideas logically, avoiding run-on sentences or fragments that can obscure meaning.

Corresponding Author: Bochari, siska.bochari@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Sentence types play a crucial role in writing skills because writing requires deep analysis to be both perfect and varied. Similarly, in a college environment, writing is an essential process for students as they are required to compose their final writing product, which demands good writing skills. As a result, many students find it challenging to edit their writing. Therefore, many students struggle to modify their writing. Writing is one of the most productive skills despite its difficulty. The majority of Indonesian students also struggle with writing, particularly when it comes to writing an essay or an article in English. Moreover, writing an article about specific research requires particular analysis (Famularsih & Helmy, 2020; Pratiwi et al., 2022; Setyani et al., 2023). Another researcher states that students have difficulty differentiating between dependent and independent clauses, identifying complex sentences, and are unfamiliar with compound-complex sentences (Warni et al., 2017). The importance of knowledge about sentence structure is that academic writers can enhance the readability of their writing. Words, phrases, or clauses can be joined using conjunctions to make sentences more engaging. The rule of composing sentences is syntax, as it involves the study of sentence structure. This research contains information and theories about the relationships among grammar, syntax, and writing.

The terminology of syntax in the application of writing can be defined as the process of arranging words together to form a sentence. Phrases, clauses, and sentences are included in the study of syntax. Syntax is one of the branches of linguistic study focusing on sentence structure. Syntax plays an essential role in language, especially in the way sentences are composed. Syntax explains studies of syntactic function, roles, and categories as the basic elements of writing skills (Leba et al., 2021; Mayasari & Ardhana, 2022; Mısır, 2017). In other words, syntax and grammar have their respective roles in writing, especially in composing sentences. A sentence is a basic unit of language and a grammatical unit of words. It is an essential fragment of language, consisting of a subject, a verb, and having complete meaning. There are several types of sentences: simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences. However, the majority of college students in the English department find it challenging to correctly construct every kind of sentence, especially when writing for academic purposes (Princess & Syarif, 2021).

Examining the problems faced by college students during the process of composing writing products, the common issues that students encounter include how to start writing, what content to include, and their understanding of structure and vocabulary. Differences in writing style can also pose challenges for students (Sulasti, n.d.; Winda et al., 2019). A prevalent problem in college academic writing is syntactic difficulty. This issue is common among students due to the complexity of syntactic rules. Many students struggle to identify aspects of syntax, such as word order. In arranging words, students particularly face difficulties with different word classes (Shakuntala, 2017). However, word order involves not just the placement of subjects, objects, and verbs, but also the ordering and determining of noun phrases, verb phrases, adjective phrases, and prepositional phrases. Analysing phrases and their functions in a sentence is challenging for some students. Additionally, creating tree diagrams presents another difficulty. Mastery of syntactic aspects, including phrases, clauses, word order, ambiguous sentences, sentence patterns, and sentence types, is necessary to overcome these problems. However, there is a gap in existing research since, as far as the researchers are aware, very few have conducted a focused exploration on dominant sentence types. Specific focus on this aspect may provide a nuanced understanding of the construction preferences of students.

Regarding the students' problems mentioned earlier, this research aims to answer several questions:

- 1) What is the most dominant sentence type used by the students?
- 2) What form of the dominant sentence is mostly used by the students?
- 3) Why do the students often use the most dominant type?

This study is expected to aid students in comprehending how different sentence structures are used in their writing. It can serve as a teaching and learning tool, and lecturers can use it as a reference when giving writing courses. By providing examples of different sentence types, this research can help students understand how to construct strong sentences and paragraphs. It can also assist other researchers by offering new references and serving as a source of information for future research. The study integrates theoretical insights from linguistic theories on sentence structures with practical implications for teaching and learning. By linking theoretical concepts with empirical findings, the research bridges the gap between theory and practice in the context of enhancing students' writing skills, thereby offering valuable insights for both educators and researchers in the field of language education, particularly seventh-semester students with their proposal writing.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Sentence Types in English

A sentence is a group of words that usually consists of a subject and a predicate and is used to convey various ideas and feelings. A sentence with multiple word categories serves as both a subject and a verb, indicating a fully formed idea or state of mind. Sentences generally occur in several forms: simple sentences, compound sentences, and complex sentences (Famularsih & Helmy, 2020; Oshima & Hogue, 2007). A sentence can be defined as a supporting tool in language that has complete meaning (Morley, 2000). Based on these opinions, this research focused on three types of sentences, namely simple sentences, compound sentences, and complex sentences. It is based on the theory of Alexander (1988).

A *simple sentence* is a collection of words with a single subject and one or more verbs and a complete meaning. There can only be one independent clause in a simple sentence. A single independent clause makes up a simple sentence. The ability to create compound and complex sentences is determined by the patterns

found in simple sentences, which are also considered basic structures. In a simple sentence, there are two forms, namely nominal sentences and verbal sentences. Next, a *compound sentence* is a sentence type that is joined by a comma and coordinating conjunctions and comprises more than just a subject and a verb. The term "FANBOYS" refers to the seven coordinating conjunctions. They are for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so. In a compound sentence, each clause is equal and joined by coordinating conjunctions (Dharmawati & Mulyadi, 2021; Sari et al., 2019). Lastly, a *complex sentence* is made up of multiple independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses, connected by a subordinating conjunction. While an independent clause can stand alone, a dependent clause starts with a subordinating conjunction, has a subject and a verb, but does not fully express a meaning. A complex sentence is connected by subordinating conjunctions, namely that, unless, until, before, after, if, although, though, as, because, despite, even if, rather than, since, as long as, so that, when, where, whereas, whether, who, whose, and while (Indriyani & Said, 2022; Quirk et al., 1985).

2.2 Elements of Sentence

A sentence needs multiple components to carry out its function. Subject (S), verb (V), object (O), complement (C), and adverb (A) are among the elements.

- 1) Subject: The subject is usually the first thing that appears at the beginning of the sentence. Normally, the form of the subject is a word, noun phrase, or nominal clause. A word is a form that cannot be divided into any smaller unit (Katamba, 2005; Quirk et al., 1985).
- 2) Verb: A verb is a word that the subject uses to describe an action or statement. Because it depicts the subject's action, the verb comes after the subject. A verb is a word that expresses a process and follows the subject because it shows the action of the subject (Katamba, 2005; Quirk et al., 1985).
- 3) Object: A word or phrase that receives the action of the verb that the subject of the sentence performed is called the object. There are two categories of objects: direct object and indirect object. A word or phrase that gets the verb's action is called a direct object. A word, phrase, or clause that functions as a noun and takes the recipient of the action from the main verb is called an indirect object (Mcmurrey, 2019; Millaku & Topanica, 2016). Meanwhile, an indirect object is a recipient of the direct object that answers the question "for what, of what, to what," etc.
- 4) Complement: A complement is a word or a group of words that is used to complete the noun or the pronoun in a sentence and is identified as the subject or the object. According to Basri et al. (2021), a complement is an essential part of a sentence. Therefore, it is different from an adjunct because an adjunct is optional and can be deleted, while a complement is required in a sentence. When the complement is omitted, the meaning of the sentence is incomplete. There are several types of complements, but this research focuses only on subject and object complements. An object complement is a word, phrase, or clause that directly follows and modifies the direct object. A complement in a sentence can be a word or phrase. There are several types of complements, which are the subject and object complements. An object complement is a word, phrase, or clause that directly follows and modifies the direct object (Ompusunggu, 2016).

There are many different kinds of sentence components that affect writing abilities. A few of them have been previously explained. In addition, there are still a number of sentence components that are crucial to writing. They are conjunctions, clauses, and phrases.

- 1) Phrase: A phrase is a compacted group of words that function as a conceptual unit. It has multiple challenges to support writing abilities in addition to syntactic complexity features (Maleke & Phafoli, 2020). It is important to keep in mind that a phrase does not have a subject and a verb.
- 2) Clause: A clause is a compact unit of English grammar organization that consists of a subject and a predicate (verb), among other English elements. There are two types of clauses: independent and dependent. The independent clause is required in all sentence types, but the dependent clause is optional. Clauses are related to one another and provide mutual support. Clauses and syntax are related. For instance, in order for students to master syntax and recognize the various sentence forms, they must also master clauses (Dewi & Haryudin, 2019; Purba et al., 2023). The students must concentrate on elaborating the two different types of clauses in the sentence, "Lili cooks fried rice, she gives me the fried rice for breakfast."

- 3) Conjunction: Conjunctions are used to create parallel sentences by joining words together, clauses together, or sentences within sentences. Conjunctions enhance the complexity and elegance of a sentence's form and allow the writer to avoid using short sentences. Conjunctions play a crucial part in adding variety and complexity to sentences, particularly when the three main conjunctions (and, but, and or) are used (Purba et al., 2017).

2.3 Factors that Influence Students' Difficulty in Distinguishing Sentence Types

Writing is one of the language skills that affect the entire system of all aspects, especially in education. Writing has significant roles in education: it shows students' ideas, serves as a benchmark of students' education quality, and relates to sentence types. The implication of the relationship between students' preferences and their academic performance is that the former influences the students' choices in writing, thereby directly affecting the quality of what they produce (Keskin, 2019; Malaguial et al., 2023). Therefore, distinguishing sentence types can be an important aspect to decrease the difficulty of differentiating English sentence types. Based on the research conducted by Sarwat et al. (2021), the reasons why students are unable to comprehend writing skills include several factors: lack of creative ideas, writing anxiety, and lack of structural organization in composing sentences (grammar and syntax).

Mohamad et al. (2022) state that there are three factors which influence students in the writing process: psychological problems, linguistic problems, and cognitive problems. These three factors are all considered internal factors. These factors cover multiple aspects, such as students' learning motivation, their understanding of language rules (especially words, phrases, clauses, and conjunctions), their confidence, and their health (Alisha et al., 2019). At the same time, there are also external factors, which include teaching and learning methods, the classroom environment, the media used in learning activities, the aspects of writing, and the material (Puspita, 2019). Poor understanding of the material is one of the representative aspects of external factors that affect students' learning activities and can impact their academic performance and preferences. Furthermore, previous studies have discovered that the most common response from the sample was linguistic problems. This shows that a student's preference indeed affects their academic performance. To conclude, it can be said that internal and external factors are the two main categories of factors affecting students' writing.

3. Method

This study employed a quantitative descriptive method. A quantitative research design calls for the researchers to gather, examine, and present data in accordance with the research topic in order to compose and analyse the theory. It is used to carry out research using numerical data but requires a detailed description and analysis (Nurhayati, 2020). The aim of this study was to find out what sentence types students used in their writing, which types were dominant, and the frequency of sentence types that students used.

The population of this study comprised students from Tadulako University because the English Department of this university has an appropriate timeline or schedule that aligns with this study. The research needed to observe students in the Seminar in ELT course to gather relevant data and results. Based on their study plan cards, the students in the seventh semester of the English Education program in 2020 passed the ELT seminar. In this course, students must complete a mini-proposal project and practice presenting their mini-research in a seminar, making them an ideal sample for the research. Simple random sampling was used as the method for sampling in this study.

Table 1. Population and sample of the study

Class	Number of Students
A	24
B	15
C	44
D	13
E	36
F	10
Total	142

Students enrolled in the seventh semester of the English Education study program made up the sample. The Slovin formula was used to determine the sample size. Referring to the formula below, the total sample size of 105 out of a population of 142 was determined with a margin of error of 5% (five per cent):

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$$n = \frac{142}{1 + 142(0,05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{142}{1 + 142(0,0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{142}{1,35}$$

$$n = 105,18$$

$$n = 105$$

Description:

- n : the total of sample
- N : the total population
- e : margin error (5% = 0,05)

The instruments of this research were document analysis and questionnaires. Document analysis was used to answer research questions (1) and (2), focusing on students' mini proposals in the Seminar in ELT course. The second instrument was a questionnaire, designed to identify the factors influencing students' difficulties in differentiating sentence types. The list of problems or factors was derived from previous studies with similar contexts, compared, and then concluded. The researcher then created a fishbone diagram to represent the variables influencing students' difficulties in distinguishing sentence types. A form listing these variables was distributed to 50 samples to check the validity of the data. The responses were checked using SPSS 23, and the validated statements were then redistributed to the 105 samples. This study applied the Likert scale technique, where respondents selected options from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, to Strongly Disagree, to express their opinions on the given topics (Beglar & Nemoto, 2014). The topics related to students' problems during learning activities.

The first step in data collection (the use of sentence types in students' writing) was to check the students' study plan cards to ensure they had passed the Seminar in ELT course. Subsequently, all samples were contacted via WhatsApp to collect their mini proposal documents. Finally, the students' writings were analysed, and sentences were categorized by type. The results for each type were then represented in a pie chart to show the percentage distribution.

4. Results

4.1 Document Analysis Results

This analysis is used to answer the first and second research questions: “the most dominant type of sentence in their writing” and “the form of dominant sentence that students use.” The data were taken from the students' background proposals. Three types of sentences were identified which are similar with the prediction set from the research's preliminary literature review. They are simple sentence, compound sentence, and complex sentence. The total frequency of each type can be seen in Figure 1.

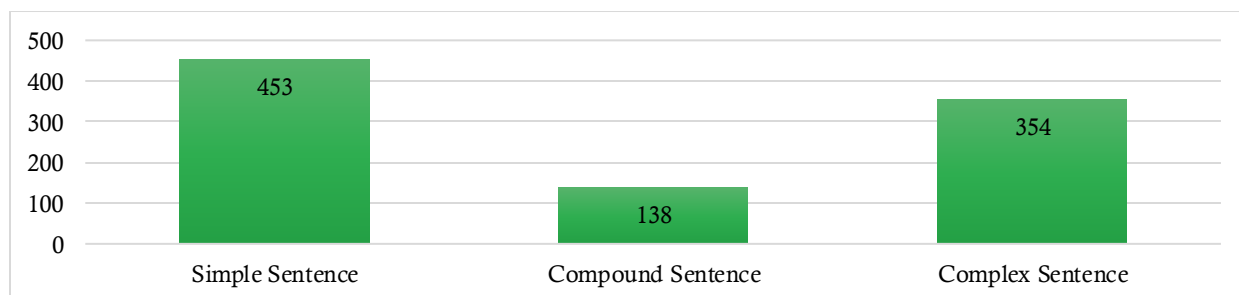


Figure 1. The most dominant sentence type that the students used and its frequency

The chart shows that students employed three different types of sentences, with simple sentences being the most common type. There are 453 sentences in of this type. With 138 sentences, compound sentences were the least common type utilized by the students. Lastly, there are a total of 354 sentences that use complex sentences.

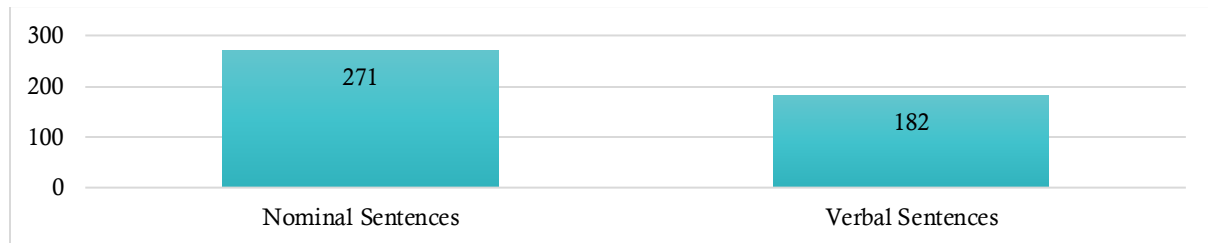


Figure 2. The frequency of simple sentence form

Expanding on the previous results, Figure 2 shows the number of simple sentences divided into two forms: nominal and verbal sentences. The students prefer nominal sentences to verbal sentences, with 271 nominal sentences having been identified in the document analysis. As for the second form, students employed 182 verbal sentences. There is a relatively small ratio (about 89 sentences) between nominal and verbal sentences. Along with the fact that both verbal and nominal sentences belong to the simple sentence category, students tend to use nominal sentences more frequently because they are simpler. Put in another way, nominal sentences are the most common type of sentence that students utilise when writing.

4.2 Questionnaire Analysis Results

To address the third research question, a questionnaire was designed and given to the sample in order to examine the responses from the students regarding the factors affecting their writing ability. After the data were analysed and processed by using SPSS 23, out of the 55 statements that were submitted, 13 was found to be valid. The table displays the statements that are valid.

Table 2. The valid statements in questionnaire

Variable	Valid Statements
Variable 1 The students lack the motivation to learn.	1. I need supporting media to support learning activity. 2. My motivation learning is increase depends on the material has been taught. 3. The lecturer who teaches influence my learning motivation. 4. I lost my concentration on studying after the holidays.
Variable 2 The students have less understanding about rules of language (especially about word, phrase, clause, and conjunction).	5. I cannot differentiate compound sentence and complex sentence. 6. I found the difficulty to make tree diagram of compound sentence and complex sentence.
Variable 3 The students are afraid of making mistakes and it affects their confidence.	7. I am nervous when I present in front of the class.
Variable 4 The students find difficulty to differentiate sentence types.	8. Compound sentence consist of one or more dependent clause.
Variable 5 The classroom environment is less supportive (e.g. inappropriate facilities).	9. Facility in the classroom influence students' concentration.
Variable 6 The learning method that lecturer used is not effective.	10. Learning method can improve my understanding. 11. Some lecturers apply learning method that ineffective and boring. 12. I disagree to the lecturers who ask the students to make summary. 13. I got the difficulty to differentiate learning method.

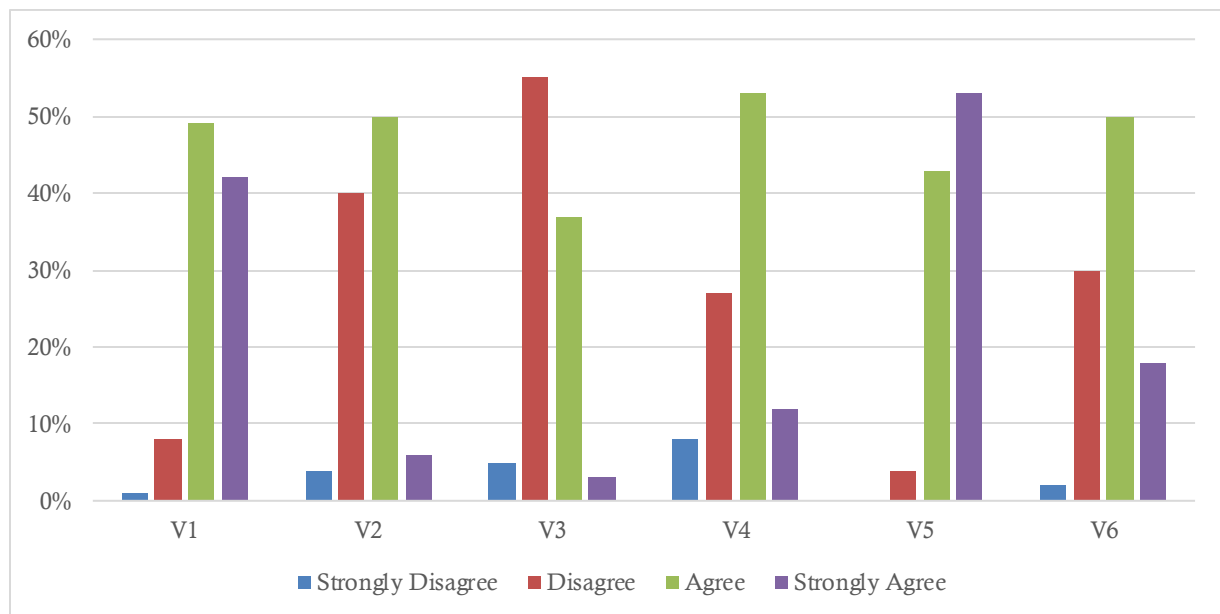


Figure 3. The frequency of the students' answers across variables

To start off, the first variable is the students' lack of motivation to learn. Three positive statements and one negative statement make up this variable (Table 2). The positive statement's goal is to identify students' motivation for teaching and learning activities. Figure 3 shows that 176 students, or 42% of the total, voted strongly agree, 205 students, or 49%, agree, 34 students, or 1%, strongly disagree, 8% chose disagree, 34 students. Additionally, the majority of students select "positive," indicating that they are not very motivated to learn. That might be the cause of the students' frequent use of simple sentences.

The students' responses to variable two—that is, their lack of comprehension of words, phrases, clauses, and conjunctions—are delivered through two statements, both of which are negative, to support the answer (Table 2). As can be seen in the chart, 6% of students (12) selected strongly agree, 50% of students (104) selected agree, 40% of students (85) selected disagree, and 4% of students (9) selected strongly disagree. The majority of students are aware of language rules.

As for variable three, there is one negative statement for this variable (Table 2). Figure 3 shows that 3% (3 students) selected strongly agree, 37% (35 students) agree, 55% (53 students) selected disagree, and the remaining 5% (5 students) selected strongly disagree. The majority of the students' responses show a negative response. It indicates that students lack confidence and are afraid of making mistakes. As a result, variable three is indicated as influencing students' writing skill.

Variable four also only has one negative statement from the students' questionnaire responses (Table 2). The results show that 12% (11 students) chose strongly agree, 53% (50 students) chose agree, other 27% (26 students) chose disagree, and last 8% (8 students) chose strongly disagree. It can be concluded that the students understand and are capable to differentiate the sentence types.

One positive statement that can be found for variable five is that there is less support in the classroom. Figure 3 shows the answers provided by the students. 53% of students (51 votes) strongly agreed with this statement, 43% of students (41 votes) agreed, 4% of students (4 votes) disagreed, and 0% of students (0 votes) or no one voted strongly disagreed. It is evident that the majority of students give positive votes. It shows that students agree that a less supportive classroom environment can affect students' learning difficulties, particularly when it comes to sentence structures. In conclusion, variable five may have an impact on students' writing and may be the cause of their preference for using simple sentences.

The final variable to be designed is variable six. The lecturers' method to their teaching and learning activity is ineffective. One positive statement and three negative statements are present (Table 2). These statements are meant to help determine the effectiveness of the lecturers' method. According to Figure 3, the majority of students (212) voted in favor of agreeing with the percentage, while 30% (126 students) and 18%

(79 students) respectively chose disagree and strongly disagreed in favor of the other positive response. The remaining 2% of students (9 votes) preferred strongly disagree. Since most students select a positive response for a negative statement, the lecturers' method is evidently effective for the students. As a result, it is not acknowledged that variable six influences students' writing.

Overall, based on the results of the 4-point Likert scale questionnaire, the students often chose the "middle" answers of agree or disagree for most of the items. However, this is mostly true only for variables two, three, four and six. The other two variables—one and five—lean more towards the "extreme" answers, which indicates that these factors that are stronger than the rest.

5. Discussion

The aims of this research were to identify the dominant sentence types used by students in their writing, to determine the specific forms of these dominant types, and to understand the reasons behind the prevalent use of these sentence types. Therefore, the data were meticulously analysed, and the findings were discussed in detail. It was observed that the most prevalent type of sentence used by students in their writing is the simple sentence. Data for this analysis were collected from various documents, which were then examined to ascertain the frequency of each sentence type.

Supporting these findings, previous studies such as those conducted by [Rahmi et al. \(2016\)](#), who focused on analysing students' essays, and [Saragih and Natalia \(2016\)](#), who examined abstract documents written by male and female students, consistently found that the simple sentence is the most frequently used type. Similarly, research by [Suhendra et al. \(2022\)](#) analysing "The Hobbit: Unexpected Journey" and [Fitria \(2021\)](#) studying students' descriptive texts also concluded that simple sentences dominate student writing. [Sari and Dafit \(2021\)](#) investigated students' understanding of research subjects and likewise found the prevalence of simple sentences. According to [\(Alexander, 1988\)](#), simple sentences are generally easier to construct compared to compound and complex sentences. For example, sentences such as "Olif is reading" and "Lili is pretty" exemplify simple sentences, with the latter being a nominal sentence due to the auxiliary verb "is."

Answering research question number two regarding the specific forms of the dominant sentence types, the analysis revealed that simple sentences predominantly manifest in two forms: nominal sentences and verbal sentences. Nominal sentences, characterized by the absence of an object but the presence of a complement after the verb, were more frequently used compared to verbal sentences, with a difference of 89 sentences. Specifically, nominal sentences appeared 271 times, whereas verbal sentences appeared 182 times in the dataset. This finding is corroborated by [Kartika \(2022\)](#), who studied students' descriptive texts, and [Wulandari \(2023\)](#), who analysed English song lyrics by Maroon 5, both noting the greater difficulty students face in using verbal sentences, resulting in more errors. Conversely, [Sukandi and Merina \(2017\)](#), investigating various text genres such as descriptive, argumentative, process, cause-effect, and comparison-contrast, found that students frequently employed simple sentences across different writing assignments. However, [Utari et al. \(2021\)](#) reported contrasting results, suggesting no significant difference in the frequency of nominal and verbal sentences, indicating students' ability to construct both types with comparable frequency. [Analisti et al. \(2016\)](#), in their research evaluating sentence structures and types in journal article citations and references, found a different pattern where complex sentences dominated, comprising 67.2% of the sentences analysed. This demonstrates variability in sentence usage depending on the context and type of writing being analysed.

Furthermore, the reasons why students often use simple sentences, or why simple sentences are the most frequently used, were explored in this study. Designing a fishbone diagram was instrumental in identifying the factors that influence students' difficulty in distinguishing sentence types. The use of a fishbone diagram to visualize and analyse factors influencing students' difficulty in distinguishing sentence types represents a methodological innovation. This approach not only aids in identifying key factors but also provides a structured framework for understanding their interrelationships, thereby offering practical implications for educational interventions and curriculum design. The analysis revealed three primary factors contributing to this difficulty: 1. lack of learning motivation among students, 2. fear of making mistakes impacting their confidence, and 3. a less supportive classroom environment. However, [Briones et al. \(2022\)](#) found a slightly different perspective, noting that the family environment and parenting style can also significantly affect students' performance, which in turn influences their socioeconomic environment. These factors collectively stem from both internal and external influences.

These findings are supported by several researchers, including Alisha et al. (2019), Sarwat et al. (2021), Malaguial et al. (2023) and Lisiswanti et al. (2022). Notably, many previous studies have highlighted students' psychology as a crucial internal factor affecting academic performance. Another critical factor emphasized in this study is students' understanding of course content, which was included as a variable in the questionnaire distributed to students, supported by Puspita (2019). While this factor may not be unique to Tadulako University, it underscores the importance of addressing students' comprehension of course material to enhance their academic performance.

A novel aspect highlighted in this study is the second factor: "students' fear of making mistakes in the classroom affecting their confidence." This factor is particularly significant among college students, despite their participation in activities that require confidence, such as public speaking. The lack of confidence often stems from the necessity to express ideas in English, a non-native language for many students, and not even a second language in their country.

In light of these various findings, this research holds implications for the educational domain, particularly concerning sentence types: simple sentences, compound sentences, and complex sentences. These concepts are underpinned by various theories related to sentences, clauses, conjunctions, and the factors influencing students' writing. Sentences serve as fundamental units of writing that every college student should master, as they are crucial for enhancing writing proficiency. This study also prepares students for academic and professional writing, aligning with theories taught by lecturers in the classroom. By learning effective sentence structuring, students can communicate their ideas clearly and coherently, avoiding run-on sentences or fragmented thoughts that can obscure meaning. Furthermore, as students enhance their writing skills, they also develop critical thinking abilities, fostering the ability to articulate and expand upon their ideas effectively. This study is particularly beneficial for seventh-semester students who are preparing their undergraduate theses or scientific papers, especially those with interests in linguistics and educational theory.

6. Conclusion

The findings reveal that students frequently use simple sentences, totaling 453 sentences. Alongside simple sentences, students also employ compound and complex sentences. The prevalence of simple sentences in students' background compositions underscores their ease of construction. This finding indicates that many students still encounter challenges when crafting complex and compound sentences. Several factors contribute to the predominance of simple sentences as the most frequently used type. Furthermore, within the category of simple sentences, two types are identified: nominal sentences occur more frequently (271 instances) than verbal sentences (182 instances). The research novelty lies in its focused examination of the dominant use of simple sentences among college students. By specifically highlighting nominal and verbal forms within simple sentences, the study provides a nuanced understanding of students' sentence construction preferences, which can contribute to the pedagogical approaches in teaching writing skills. Moreover, employing a fishbone diagram to identify, elaborate upon, and resolve issues in this study can serve as an innovative approach applicable not only in linguistic research but also in educational research. Both internal and external factors contribute to why students prefer simple sentences in their writing, as revealed through analysis of the previously designed questionnaire. This process facilitates easy access to results for readers interested in conducting similar studies. Three key considerations emerge: (1) lack of student motivation to learn, (2) fear of making mistakes and its impact on confidence, and (3) insufficient support in the classroom environment. As this study integrates various theories to enhance reader comprehension, the anticipated impact of this research is both theoretical and practical. It is expected that this study will aid readers in understanding the use of different sentence types in writing. It can serve as an instructional and educational resource, providing lecturers with a reference for teaching writing courses. Through examples of diverse sentence types, this research will help students grasp how to construct cohesive sentences and paragraphs effectively. Additionally, this study serves as a valuable resource for future research and a reference point for other researchers. Furthermore, it will assist seventh-semester students in crafting their proposals effectively.

References

- Alexander, L. G. (1988). *Longman English Grammar*. Longman.
- Alisha, F., Safitri, N., Santoso, I., & Siliwangi, I. (2019). Students' Difficulties in Writing Efl. *Professional Journal of English Education*, 2(1), 20–25.
-

- <http://download.garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/article.php?article=1090119&val=16394&title=FININDING> Analisti, D., Language, E., & Indonesia, U. P. (2016). Evaluating the Quality of Sentence Structures, Citations and References in Journal Articles: A Case Study in the Faculty of Mathematics and Science and the Faculty of Engineering. *Unpublished*, 1–18.
- Basri, H., Hastini, & Bochari, S. (2021). *Understanding Syntax.pdf*. Untad Press.
- Beglar, D., & Nemoto, T. (2014). Developing Likert-scale Questionnaires. *JALT2013 Conference Proceedings*, 1–8.
- Briones, S. K. F., Dagamac, R. J. R., David, J. D., & Landerio, C. A. B. (2022). Factors Affecting the Students' Scholastic Performance: A Survey Study. *Indonesian Journal of Educational Research and Technology (IJERT)*, 2(1), 97–102. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijert.v2i2.41394>
- Dewi, E. P., & Haryudin, A. (2019). The uses of clause relations in the Guardian Article: Destroying the World's Natural Heritage: 'Komodo is Reaching a Tipping Point.' *Project*, 2(6), 824–829.
- Dharmawati, & Mulyadi. (2021). A Study on Relative Clause in English, Indonesian and Arabic Language: A Comparative Analysis. *Journal of Language Teaching and Learning, Linguistics and Literature*, 4778, 109–115. <https://doi.org/10.24256/ideas.v9i1.1804>
- Famularsih, S., & Helmy, M. I. (2020). A Comparative Study of Sentence Building in Writing Ability Among Students in Indonesia. *Pedagogy: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 8(2), 89. <https://doi.org/10.32332/pedagogy.v8i2.2222>
- Fitria, T. N. (2021). Non-EFL Students' Ability in Writing Simple Sentences of Descriptive Paragraphs. *JETAL: Journal of English Teaching & Applied Linguistics*, 4(4), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.36655/jetal.v4i1.762>
- Indriyani, R., & Said, M. (2022). Exploring Complex Sentences and Metaphors in Online News Articles about Covid-19 in Asia Times. *INFERENCE: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 5(2), 121–132.
- Kartika, V. D. (2022). Nominal and Verbal Sentence of Simple Present Tense Errors in Students' Descriptive Writing Ability. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris* <https://Journal.Unismuh.Ac.Id/>, 11, 165–175. <https://doi.org/10.26618/exposure.v11i2.6945>
- Katamba, F. (2005). *An Introduction to Phonology* (Third Edit). PEARSON Longman.
- Keskin, S. (2019). Factors Affecting Students Preferences for Online and Blended Learning: Motivational Vs Cognitive. *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning*, 22(2), 15. <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=848342>
- Leba, S. M. R., Uspayanti, R., Butarbutar, R., & Bawawa, M. (2021). Syntactical Analysis of Students' Writing Paper. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 603(Icss), 427–430. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211130.077>
- Lisiswanti, R., Indah sari, M., & Swastyardi, D. (2022). Factors Affecting Low Academic Achievement of Undergraduate Medical Students: Student Experience. *Jurnal Pendidikan Kedokteran Indonesia: The Indonesian Journal of Medical Education*, 11(1), 108. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jpki.65566>
- Malaguial, P. M., Gacoscos, G., Martinez, E., Abusama, H., & Valdez, A. (2023). Senior High School Strands: Factors Affecting the Students' Preference. *ASEAN Journal of Educational Research and Technology*, 2(1), 57–66. <https://ejournal.bumipublikasinusantara.id/index.php/ajert/article/view/135>
- Maleke, M., & Phfoli, L. S. (2020). The Use of Nominal Subordinate Clause as a Syntactic Complexity Measure by Some National University of Lesotho Students. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation (IJLLT)*, 3(11), 55–67. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2020.3.11.17>
- Mayasari, D., & Ardhana, N. R. (2022). Syntax Structure in Manduros' Utterance as Basic Writing Skill. *ELite Journal: International Journal of Education, Language, and Literature*, 2(2), 100–108. <https://doi.org/10.26740/elitejournal.v2n2.p100-107>
- Mcmurrey, D. (2019). *Basic Patterns and Elements of the Sentence*. Digital Commons. <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/opentc/32>
- Millaku, S., & Topanica, X. (2016). The Indirect Object (IO) – Albanian and English. *European Journal of*
-

- Foreign Language Teaching*, 1(1), 31–39. <https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3111101>
- Misir, H. (2017). The analysis of A1 Level Speaking Exam in Terms of Syntax-The Effect of General Competence on Syntax in A1 Level Speaking. *Dil ve Dilbilimi Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 13(1), 27–40.
- Mohamad, F., Anuar, N., & Daud, N. S. M. (2022). Factors Influencing Academic Writing Behaviour Among Undergraduates. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 10(2), 56.
- Morley, G. D. (2000). *Syntax in Functional Grammar: An Introduction to Lexicogrammar in Systemic Linguistics*. Continuum.
- Nurhayati, D. A. W. (2020). *Research methodology*. Akademi Pustaka.
- Ompusunggu, R. (2016). The Study of Adjective Phrase in the Seventeen Magazines' Articles. *The Episteme Journal of English Literature and Linguistics*, 3(1), 1–26.
- Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (2007). Introduction to Academic Writing. In *Pearson Education Limited* (Third Edit). PEARSON Longman.
https://edisclipnes.usp.br/plueginefile.php/3928474/mod_resource/content/1/IntroductiontoAcademicWriting.pdf
- Pratiwi, A., Arsyad, S., & Syafryadin, S. (2022). A Comparative Study on Sentence Characters of Research Introductions by Indonesian Authors in Applied Linguistics. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 22(1), 53–63. <https://doi.org/10.24071/joll.v22i1.3502>
- Princess, P., & Syarif, H. (2021). EFL University Students' Errors in Constructing Complex Sentences in Academic Writing. *Proceedings of the Eighth International Conference on English Language and Teaching (ICOELT-8 2020)*, 579, 34–40. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210914.007>
- Purba, C. R., Yulia, A., Sari, P., Pangaribuan, W., & Pane, I. I. I. (2023). Article Sentence Analysis: Use of Clauses and Phrases in Scientific Sentences. *Linguistica*, 12(01), 19–25.
- Purba, D. R., . S., & Pulungan, R. (2017). A Comparative Study of Types of Conjunctions Used in the Results and Discussion Section of Students' Ras and Teflin Jas Published in 2015. *Journal of English Education and Teaching*, 1(1), 65–73.
- Puspita, C. (2019). Factors Affecting Students' Difficulties in Writing Thesis Mixed-Methods Research at Eighth Semester of English Study Program in IAIN Curup. *3rd English Language and Literature International Conference (ELLiC) Proceedings*, 3, 13–22.
<https://doi.org/https://jurnal.unimus.ac.id/index.php/ELLIC/article/view/4683/4210>
- Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. Longman.
- Rahmi, M., Saun, S., & Adnan, A. (2016). A Study of Sentence Types on the Writing of English Department Students. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 5(1).
<http://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/jelt>
- Saragih, W., & Natalia, C. H. (2016). *Types of Sentences Used by Male and Female Writers in Journal Article Abstracts*.
- Sari, I. D., Syarif, H., & Amri, Z. (2019). An Analysis of Compound Sentences in Students' Writing. *Seventh International Conference on Language and Arts*, 301(Icla 2018), 341–348.
- Sari, W. G., & Dafit, F. (2021). The Role of Teachers in Simple Sentence Writing Learning for Primary School Students. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 13(3), 1835-1840.
<https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v13i3.1045>
- Sarwat, S., Ullah, N., ANjum, H. M. S., & Bhuttah, T. M. (2021). Problems and Factors Affecting Students English Writing Skills at Elementary Level. *Elementary Education Online*, 20(5), 3079–3086.
<https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2021.05.332>
- Setyani, E. D., Bunau, E., & Rezeki, Y. S. (2023). The Influence of Grammarly towards Indonesian EFL Students' First-Degree Thesis Writing Confidence. *Elsya : Journal of English Language Studies*, 5(1), 54-67. <https://doi.org/10.31849/elsya.v5i1.6773>
- Shakuntala, R. (2017). Problems in Learning Syntactic Aspects of Language and Remedial Teaching Measures. *Muallim Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)*, 1(1), 1–11.
-

- Suhendra, E., Pertiwi, S. A., & Zaini, N. (2022). Syntactic Analysis of Sentence Structure in “The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey.” *Humanitatis : Journal of Language and Literature*, 8(2), 205–216.
<https://doi.org/10.30812/humanitatis.v8i2.1635>
- Sukandi, S. S., & Merina, Y. (2017). Reflecting the Percentage of Sentence Types in EFL Students’ Paragraph Writing Assignments: A Descriptive Study on Pedagogical Outcomes of Learning English Writing. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching*, 28, 187–199.
<https://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/selt/article/view/8002>
- Warni, D., & Rozimela, Y., & Fitrawati, F. (2018). An Analysis of the Complex Sentences used in the Theses Written by English Department Graduates of March 2017 Period in Universitas Negeri Padang. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 7(1), 229-237. <https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v7i1.9772>
- Winda, M., Oktaviani, A., & Yulfi. (2019). An Analysis of Students’ Problems in Writing an Essay on Third Semester Students of English Education Study Program at STKIP PGRI Lubuklinggau. *Journal of English Education Literature and Linguistics*, 2, No. 2, 7823–7830.
- Wulandari, D. (2023). The Analysis of the Students’ Error in Differentiating Between Nominal and Verbal Sentences in English Songs Lyric. *JIM: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pendidikan Sejarah*, 8(4), 3893-3896.
<https://doi.org/10.24815/jimps.v8i4.26506>

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

The questionnaire distributed to the students are in Indonesian and the items were not translated into English. Description of the 4-point Likert scale options (SS: Strongly Agree, S: Agree, TS: Disagree, STS: Strongly Disagree). The link to the questionnaire is:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1QLkWoOM5h2wN6IMcwPEfiirPYZgjs4dGIKdo72-Q6CU/edit>

No.	Question	SS	S	TS	STS
Variable 1					
1.	Saya sering kehilangan motivasi belajar. [I often lose motivation to learn]				
2.	Saya butuh supporting media untuk mendukung pembelajaran [I need supporting media to support learning]				
3.	Circle atau perkumpulan di kelas mempengaruhi motivasi belajar [Circle or class gatherings affect learning motivation]				
4.	Motivasi belajar saya meningkat tergantung dari materi yang diajarkan [My learning motivation increases depending on the material taught]				
5.	Dosen yang mengajar mempengaruhi motivasi belajar saya [The lecturer who teaches affects my learning motivation]				
6.	Saya jarang membaca kembali materi yang telah dijelaskan [I rarely reread the material that has been explained]				
7.	Dosen sering memotivasi mahasiswa untuk belajar [The lecturer often motivates students to learn]				
8.	Saya menyukai metode pembelajaran tertentu untuk meningkatkan motivasi belajar [I like certain learning methods to increase learning motivation]				
9.	Saya kehilangan konsentrasi belajar setelah libur [I lose concentration on learning after holidays]				
10.	Saya menyukai materi tentang sentence types [I like the material about sentence type]				
11.	Saya mengimplementasikan materi sentence type untuk meningkatkan minat belajar [I implement sentence type material to increase interest in learning]				
Variable 2					
12.	Saya sulit membedakan kata frasa klausa dan kalimat [I have difficulty distinguishing between phrases, clauses and sentences]				
13.	Saya tidak mengetahui tipe-tipe kalimat [I don't know the types of sentences]				
14.	Saya bingung menggunakan subordinating dan coordinating conjunction [I am confused about using subordinating and coordinating conjunctions]				
15.	Saya tidak bisa membedakan compound sentence dan complex sentence [I cannot distinguish between compound sentences and complex sentences]				
16.	Penggunaan coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) hanya berlaku untuk compound sentence [The use of coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS) only applies to compound sentences]				
17.	Noun clause dan adverb clause merupakan klausa pembentuk complex sentence [Noun clauses and adverb clauses are clauses that form complex sentences]				
18.	Complex sentence merupakan kalimat yang terdiri dari satu independent clause dan 2 atau lebih dependent clause [A complex sentence is a sentence consisting of one independent clause and 2 or more dependent clauses]				
19.	Saya sulit membuat tree diagram dari compound dan complex sentence [I have difficulty making a tree diagram of compound and complex sentences]				
20.	Dosen menjelaskan secara rinci mengenai penggunaan konjungsi pada kalimat [The lecturer explains in detail about the use of conjunctions in sentences]				

21. FANBOYS terdiri dari konjungsi for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so
[FANBOYS consists of the conjunctions for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so]
 22. Verb phrase bisa menjadi subjek pada sebuah kalimat
[Verb phrases can be the subject of a sentence]
 23. Penggunaan konjungsi "and, but, so" harus paralel dan memiliki kelas kata yang sama
[The use of the conjunctions "and, but, so" must be parallel and have the same word class]
-

Variable 3

24. Saya gugup ketika presentasi di depan kelas
[I am nervous when presenting in front of the class]
 25. Feedback dari dosen membuat saya down
[Feedback from lecturers makes me down]
 26. Diskusi dan presentasi kelompok merupakan metode belajar yang tidak efektif
[Group discussions and presentations are ineffective learning methods]
 27. Saya selalu belajar dari kesalahan
[I always learn from my mistakes]
 28. Saya jarang memberikan feedback kepada teman
[I rarely give feedback to friends]
 29. Memberikan feedback sangat penting untuk meningkatkan rasa percaya diri saya
[Giving feedback is very important to increase my self-confidence]
 30. Ruangan kelas mempengaruhi kepercayaan diri mahasiswa
[Classrooms affect students' self-confidence]
 31. Kedekatan secara personal antar mahasiswa dapat mengurangi rasa kurang percaya diri
[Personal closeness between students can reduce feelings of lack of self-confidence]
-

Variable 4

32. Saya lebih suka menggunakan simple sentence
[I prefer to use simple sentences]
 33. Tipe kalimat terdiri dari simple, compound, dan complex sentence
[Sentence types consist of simple, compound, and complex sentences]
 34. Simple sentence terdiri dari satu subjek dan satu kata kerja
[Simple sentences consist of one subject and one verb]
 35. Compound sentence menggunakan coordinating conjunction
[Compound sentences use coordinating conjunctions]
 36. Complex sentence menggunakan subordinating conjunction
[Complex sentences use subordinating conjunctions]
 37. Compound sentence terdiri dari 2 satu atau lebih dependent clause
[Compound sentences consist of 2 or more dependent clauses]
-

Variable 5

38. Fasilitas di kelas mempengaruhi konsentrasi mahasiswa
[Classroom facilities affect student concentration]
 39. Ruang kelas yang panas membuat saya suntuk
[A hot classroom makes me feel bored]
 40. Salah satu faktor pendukung motivasi belajar yaitu ruang kelas yang nyaman dan banyak fasilitas pendukung
[One of the supporting factors for learning motivation is a comfortable classroom with lots of supporting facilities]
 41. Saya butuh ruangan belajar ber-AC
[I need an air-conditioned study room]
 42. Saya tidak butuh aliran listrik di kelas
[I don't need electricity in the classroom]
 43. Kursi chitose (yang tersambung dengan meja) sangat tidak nyaman
[Chitose chairs (connected to the desk) are very uncomfortable]
 44. Pencahayaan di kelas sangat penting bagi saya
[Lighting in the classroom is very important to me]
 45. Saya merasa puas dengan fasilitas kampus saat ini
[I am satisfied with the current campus facilities]
-

Variable 6

46. Saya menyukai metode pembelajaran FGD (Focus Group Discussion)
[I like the FGD (Focus Group Discussion) learning method]
 47. Setiap dosen menerapkan metode pembelajaran yang sama
[Every lecturer applies the same learning method]
 48. Metode pembelajaran dapat meningkatkan pemahaman saya
[Learning methods can improve my understanding]
 49. Saya kesulitan memahami materi yang tidak dijelaskan di papan tulis
[I have difficulty understanding material that is not explained on the board]
 50. Saya menyukai penjelasan materi yang "teacher center"
[I like the explanation of material that is "teacher centred"]
 51. Beberapa dosen menerapkan metode pembelajaran yang kurang efektif dan membosankan
[Some lecturers apply learning methods that are less effective and boring]
 52. Saya menentang dosen yang memberikan tugas membuat resume atau ringkasan
[I oppose lecturers who give assignments to make resumes or summaries]
 53. Saya kesulitan mengikuti metode Problem Based Learning (PBL)
[I have difficulty following the Problem Based Learning (PBL) method]
 54. Saya tidak peduli dengan metode pembelajaran yang diterapkan
[I don't care about the learning methods applied]
 55. Saya kesulitan membedakan metode pembelajaran
[I have difficulty distinguishing learning methods]
-

Appendix 2 - Sentence Analysis

Speaking is a communication activity that consists of at least two people using words or sentences. Speaking is the process of saying words, conveying a message, or explaining something by using the voice to have a conversation with someone. From this explanation, it can be concluded that speaking is the process of conveying messages, conveying ideas or information, and explaining something that can be understood by others, speaking activities must be carried out by at least two people. From the statement above we can get that speaking is important for communication. In the teaching and learning process speaking is very important because by speaking students can explore their ideas and knowledge directly. This means by speaking we can find out whether students are able to understand what the teacher teaches directly. In fact, achieving fluency in speaking is not easy. Students are not only demanded to use grammar correctly or have good pronunciation and vocabulary, they are also demanded to know the knowledge of how to use the language.

Simple sentence: 4

Compound sentence: 2

Complex sentence: 3