



## **An Analysis of Sentence Types in Research Article Abstracts Written by English Education Students of UNP**

**Siti Julya Rahti Hasibuan<sup>1</sup>, M. Affandi Arianto<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Negeri Padang

Correspondence Email : [sitijulyarahti07@gmail.com](mailto:sitijulyarahti07@gmail.com)

---

### **Article History**

Published: 2024-06-03

---

### **Abstract**

This research aimed to examine the sentence types in the abstract section using a qualitative approach and content analysis. This research employed Brandon's theory (2011) of sentence types to see what sentence types were written by English education students of UNP in their research article abstracts. Then, 20 research article abstracts were used as the data of this research retrieved from JELT UNP, and the data were analyzed using a checklist table as an instrument. According to the result, it was found that not all types of sentences were used in every abstract. Simple sentences were used more frequently (67.5%) than complex sentences (28.1%) in abstracts. Compound sentences (3.1%) and compound-complex sentences (1.2%) were less common. Finally, this research has pedagogical significance for a better comprehension of academic writing, especially concerning the language use of a research article.

---

### **Keywords:**

Content Analysis,  
Sentence Types,  
Research Article  
Abstracts

---

©2024 The Author(s) Publish by Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris FBS UNP. This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

**How to Cite:** Hasibuan, S. J. R., & Arianto, M. A. (2024). An Analysis of Sentence Types in Research Article Abstracts Written by English Education Students of UNP. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 13 (2): pp. 637-645, DOI: [10.24036/jelt.v13i2.128795](https://doi.org/10.24036/jelt.v13i2.128795)

---

## **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is one of the English skills that should be mastered by EFL students to complete their studies at the university. Nunan et al. (2003) define writing as the process of generating, organizing, and expressing ideas through sentences and paragraphs that are comprehensible to the readers. However, writing seems to be a challenging skill for students due to the complex process of writing, because they also have to consider the components of writing such as spelling, syntax, vocabulary, and organization of ideas (Chong, 2018 cited in Sundari et al., 2021). However, this skill is essential for every higher-education student to handle academic tasks (Ghabool et al., 2012).

English undergraduate students at the university level are required to produce academic texts, including research articles. Writing research articles is a requirement for undergraduate students to finish their studies at the university. Thus, students are expected to have the ability to write academic texts so that they can write a good research article from their thesis as a final task. A research article is a written report

presenting an author's research results. In the research article, the abstract is an important part that represents the entire research contents.

The abstract section has several functions. Firstly, it allows readers to determine whether the research is relevant to their interests (Juanda & Kurniawan, 2020; Kosasih, 2018). Thus, it saves time by guiding the readers to reliable sources that are aligned with their writing goals. Secondly, it provides a concise summary of the study to help readers quickly grasp the purpose of the research, making it easier for them to understand what the research is about (Juanda & Kurniawan, 2020). Lastly, the abstract is an indicator to determine the quality of the research article and help readers indirectly evaluate its worth (Hakim et al., 2021).

As an academic text, certain criteria must be given extra attention while writing a research article abstract. These include avoiding contractions, informal language, the use of "you" as a subject, and asking direct questions; instead, it is recommended to utilize different sentence types, passive voice, strong vocabulary, and single-word verbs to enhance the formality and clarity of writing (Princess & Syarif, 2021). Generally, using sentence types will show the quality and avoid monotonous writing.

Before focusing on the other components, one of the most important things to acquire good writing is to pay attention to the sentence types (Rahmi, Saun, & Adnan, 2016). Sentence types refer to the arrangement of phrases and clauses within a sentence which consist of four sentences; simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence. EFL students need to pay attention to sentence types when it comes to writing abstract. They must be able to arrange phrases and clauses properly to form good sentences within their paragraphs.

Studies on the use of sentence types have been conducted. First, a study conducted by Martínez (2016) examined the sentence composition of bilingual students and non-bilingual students by evaluating their essays. Fuad (2023) conducted a research on the types of sentences used by students in recount texts. While Maulana et al. (2023) investigated the ability of undergraduate students to identify sentence types and the difficulties faced by the students. Besides, several research also have been conducted in the research abstract section. Most of the research still focused on genre analysis (Asadi, 2023; Maher & Al-Khasawneh, 2016) and rhetorical moves in research abstracts by comparing them across different fields (Amnuai, 2019; Juanda & Kurniawan, 2020; Pratiwi & Kurniawan, 2021).

The previous studies above did not specifically focus on sentence types within the research article abstract. Thus, it is important to conduct a research regarding the use of sentence types in research article abstracts. In doing this research, the students and writers, particularly those from non-English backgrounds, are expected to be able to facilitate or improve their academic writing skill by using sentence types to convey ideas, especially in writing research article abstract.

## **METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

Under the qualitative research approach, this research was conducted using a descriptive research design. A descriptive research design involved collecting data to test hypotheses or provide answers to questions about the current state of the study's subject (Gay & Mills, 2019). Therefore, this descriptive research was used to analyze

and describe the use of sentence types in research article abstract written by English education students of UNP. Furthermore, this research used a quantitative calculation to find the dominant use of sentence types in the research article abstract written by English education students of UNP.

### ***Data and Source of Data***

This research used 20 abstracts of research articles from the Journal of English Language Teaching (JELT UNP). For each year from 2020 to 2023, five research articles were selected using a simple random sampling with the help of Microsoft Excel. Due to the highly intensive manual coding process, working with a larger dataset was difficult. Therefore, the number of abstracts from each journal was based on the minimum requirement proposed by Corder & Foreman (2009), which is around 20-30 data. In addition, a shorter publication period reveals current trends in abstract writing (Nurcik et al., 2022).

In collecting data, the website Journal of English language teaching (JELT UNP) <https://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/jelt> was visited to obtain abstracts. Then, a simple random sampling was utilized with the help of Microsoft excel to select 20 abstracts. finally, the sentence from the chosen abstracts was identified based on its type. Furthermore, For data analysis, a manual coding was run to determine the frequency of sentence types written by students and international authors in their abstracts. The process of data analysis was done in several steps. First, the data which is sentences from the chosen abstract were entered into a checklist table. Second, sentences were categorized based on their types with giving a checklist. Brandon's theory (2011) was used to identify the sentence types when categorizing the abstract. Lastly, two inter-coders were invited to check the reliability of this analysis results.

### ***Instrumentation***

A checklist format, which was validated by an English Language and Literature lecturer at Universitas Negeri Padang, was utilized as an instrument to determine the percentage of sentence types in abstracts written by English Education students from UNP. Besides, to ensure the reliability of this research, both intra-coder and inter-coder were employed in which the researcher individually analyzed the sentence types for one month or six times. Subsequently, 10 abstracts (5 from each journal or 25% of the entire data) were randomly chosen and reviewed by intercoder (Kanoksilapatham, 2005).

Furthermore, two inter-coders were invited to assess the reliability of this research. The inter-coders were chosen because of their strong grammar skills. This was evidenced by their good grades in grammar courses. In assessing the analysis result, the coders were initially briefed to familiarize themselves with the classification of sentence types. They were then asked to classify the sentences based on their types. Finally, we discussed any discrepancies found until we reached the final decisions. Cohen Kappa's percent agreement was also used to see the agreement of the analysis result between the coders. The value of reliability result is 8.49, which indicates a perfect level of agreement (Kimberley, 2019).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Research Finding

This research found that there were 160 sentences from 20 abstracts written by English education students of UNP. The sentences were analyzed using Brandon’s theory (2011) to see what sentence types are used by students in their research article abstracts. It was found that students used variation of sentence types with different frequency. However, the majority of the sentences that the students used were simple sentences. The frequency of sentence types is depicted in the following table:

*Table 1 Sentence Types Occurrences*

No.	Sentence Types	F	%
1	Simple Sentence	108	67.5%
2	Compound Sentence	5	3.1%
3	Complex Sentence	45	28.1%
4	Compound-Complex Sentence	2	1.2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>160</b>	<b>100%</b>

Based on the table above, it is known that the students used simple sentences more frequently, which occur 108 times (67,5%). Following simple sentences, complex sentences were the second most used sentence type, occurring 45 times (28,1%). In addition, students rarely used compound and compound-complex sentences, with the only 5 occurrences (3.1%) and 2 occurrences (1.2%) respectively.

#### a. Simple Sentence

Simple sentences are basic sentences that only have one independent clause. In this research, simple sentences always appear in every abstract written by students. Furthermore, 108 out of 160 total sentences were identified as simple sentences.

##### *Excerpt 1*

*“This research aimed to find out the correlation between students’ vocabulary mastery and speaking ability at grade 8 of SMP Negeri 26 Padang.” (S02)*

##### *Excerpt 2*

*“The researcher analyzed and categorized the morpho-syntactic errors based on its types.” (S20)*

Excerpt 1 above is simple sentence as the sentence only consists of one independent clause with one subject and one verb without any dependent clauses. Similarly, excerpt 2 also shows that sentences only consist of one independent using multiple subjects and verbs without any dependent clauses.

#### b. Compound Sentence

Compound sentences, consisting of two or more independent clauses, become fewer sentences the students use in their abstracts. 5 out of 160 total sentences were

identified as compound sentences. Upon further analysis, 5 compound sentences were found in 4 abstracts written by the students.

**Excerpt 3**

*“The essays were analyzed by the researcher, **and** it was revised by a valuator and two raters as the validity and reliability of this research.” (S10)*

**Excerpt 4**

*“Meanwhile, 21st century skills were implemented in the classroom; **however**, the application of collaboration skills had not been fully implemented due to several problems faced by the teacher especially in teaching duration.” (S07)*

Excerpt 3 is a compound sentence because it consists of two independent clauses connected by coordinating conjunctions “and”. Similarly, excerpt 4 is also a compound sentence as it consists of two independent clauses connected by a transitional word “however” and a semicolon before the word and a comma after.

**c. Complex Sentence**

Complex sentence, which consists of one independent clause and one or two dependent clauses, are used by students. Out of 160 total sentences, 45 sentences were identified as complex sentences. In addition, further analysis revealed that only one abstract written by a student did not use a complex sentence. Here are some examples of complex sentences found in students’ abstracts.

**Excerpt 5**

*“Based on data analysis, it was found **that** students’ vocabulary mastery and speaking ability were fair.” (S02)*

**Excerpt 6**

*“The participants of this research were 22 eleventh grade students in SMAN 2 Padang who took English as Specialization class”.* (S05)

**Excerpt 7**

*“They were selected **because** they had taken a course on essay writing.” (S01)*

Excerpt 5 is complex sentence because the sentence consists of one independent clause and one dependent clause. Additionally, the sentence uses a noun clause as the dependent clause connected using the subordinate conjunction “that,” which functions as the object of the clause before. Furthermore, excerpt 6 shows that the sentence written also consists of one independent clause and one dependent clause, making it a complex sentence. The sentence was constructed using a relative clause connected with the relative pronoun “who” that refers to the word “students”. Lastly, excerpt 7 shows that the complex sentence was constructed in the form of the adverbial clause as the dependent clause using a subordinate conjunction “because” to show reason.

#### d. Compound-Complex Sentence

Compound-complex sentence becomes the least sentence used by students. 2 out of 337 total sentences were identified as compound-complex sentences. Upon further analysis, two compound-complex sentences were found in two abstracts written by the students. Here are examples of compound-complex sentences found in the students' abstracts.

##### *Excerpt 8*

*"The results show that the dominant theme types used in the students' discussion text are simple unmarked theme (44.61 %), and multiple unmarked theme (42.35 %), and the types of theme least frequently used are simple marked theme (10.14 %), and multiple marked theme (2.90 %)."* (S01)

##### *Excerpt 9*

*"The result of this research showed that reading motivation partially had no correlation with reading comprehension (Sig. 0.637 > 0.05); enthusiasm partially had a correlation with reading comprehension (Sig. 0.019 > 0.05) with the negative correlation and moderate level based on the Pearson Correlation (-0.425); and reading motivation and enthusiasm simultaneously had no correlation with reading comprehension (Sig. 0.067 > 0.05)."* (S17)

Excerpts 8 and 9 are compound-complex sentences as they consist of two or more independent clause and one dependent clause. Additionally, those compound-complex sentences were constructed using noun clauses as dependent clauses because they are connected using the conjunction "that" as the object from the clause before.

#### Discussion

The results of the research highlight that sentence types are crucial elements of academic writing that should be given proper consideration. As previously mentioned, using various sentence types in academic texts, such as research article abstracts, can enhance quality and avoid monotonous writing, thus making the article more engaging to the reader. According to the obtained data, the most common sentence types used in the abstracts was the simple sentence (67.5%), followed by complex sentence (28.1%), compound sentence (3.1%), and compound-complex sentence (1.2%).

Students used simple sentences frequently in abstracts writing. The results of this study are similar to other studies conducted by Saragih & Hutajulu (2020), which also found that students tended to use simple sentences in their abstracts. However, in contrast to Mubshirah et al. (2023), who found that students frequently used complex sentences. This difference occurs because students want to convey straightforward information that is easy to understand, and also avoid grammatical errors. In addition, students' lack of competence to write more effective sentences and inability to convey complex ideas in the form of complex sentences are also factors why students use simple sentences frequently (Cahyono et al., 2016).

Furthermore, complex sentence becomes sentence frequently used by students after simple sentence. In contrast to a research conducted by Mubshirah et al. (2023),

who found that complex sentences were the most common sentences used by students in their abstracts. Additionally, another international research conducted by Deveci (2019), who also found that Anglophone and Turkish Authors used complex sentences more often in their abstracts. Not only in the abstract section, other sections of research article were also written mostly using complex sentences. Thus, it conforms what was claimed by Rooyen & Jordaan (2009), that an important aspect of academic purposes is the use of complex sentences.

Besides, the students rarely used compound-complex sentences, which is consistent with Saragih & Hutajulu (2020) and Mubshirah et al. (2023) findings, who also found that students rarely used compound-complex sentences in their abstracts. In contrast to Deveci (2019), Anglophone and Turkish authors used compound-complex sentences as the second most common type of sentence after complex sentences. This difference occurs because students prefer to convey information in a clear and concise manner while avoiding wordy sentences.

Generally, The use of sentence types is one of the criteria that needs to be considered in academic writing as they assist in conveying ideas and information in a clear and structured manner. Writing academic article typically involves presenting research findings, analyzing data, and supporting arguments with evidence. Thus, the authors should be able to vary sentence types in their writing. As mentioned earlier, the students in this research tended to use simple sentences in their abstracts. However, overusing simple sentences can result in choppy sentences and less information conveyed. To avoid them, the students are expected to be able to use complex sentences in their writing. This is because complex sentence become one of the important criteria in academic writing. The higher the student's course level, the more complex sentences should be produced in the writing; this indicates students' writing proficiency (Cahyono & Mukminatien, 2016; Dewi, 2017). Using complex sentence allows writers to convey a lot of related information within one sentence, such as showing cause-effect, contrast, condition, comparison, and providing additional information; thus, paragraphs can avoid choppy sentences.

Therefore, the results of this study provide important implications that can help lecturer to teach the use of complex sentences in abstract writing. Furthermore, students should also be able to apply their knowledge of the use of complex sentences in their research article abstracts. This is because complex sentence is suitable for academic writing (Eli Hinkel, 2013). In addition, someone' ability to use complex sentences also indicates maturity in writing (Krashen, 1981; Warriner & Griffith, 1969).

## **CONCLUSION**

The aim of this research was to examine the use of different sentence types in abstracts of research articles written by English education students of UNP. The findings of this research indicated that students tended to use simple sentences, with compound-complex sentences being rarely used. Therefore, lectures should focus on improving the students' skill in using sentence types, particularly their ability to use complex sentence. Additionally, students should apply their knowledge of sentence types to improve the quality of their writing.

Although this research gives insightful information on the use of sentence types in research article abstracts written by students, it has some limitations that need to be considered for future research. This research still focused on research article abstracts, therefore there is still an opportunity to examine sentence types in other parts of research articles. Furthermore, using larger data of research articles from different disciplines may also give valuable insights into the use of sentence types in research articles.

## REFERENCES

- Amnuai, W. (2019). Analyses of rhetorical moves and linguistic realizations in accounting research article abstracts published in international and Thai-Based journals. *SAGE Open*, 9(1). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244018822384>
- Asadi, J. (2023). A contrastive genre analysis of research article abstracts written by native and non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Studies in Learning and Teaching English (Vol. 12)*.
- Cahyono, B.Y., Mukminatien, N., & Amrina, R. (2016). Indonesian students' writing proficiency and their ability in using complex sentences. *International Journal on studies in English language and literature (IJSELL)*, 4(9), 22-32
- Corder, G. W., & Foreman, D. I. (2009). *Nonparametric statistics for non-statisticians*. Wiley.
- Dewi, R. (2017). Lexical and syntactic complexities in undergraduate students' research articles and their correlation to their quality. *Jurnal Pendidikan Humaniora*, 5(3), 123-133.
- Ghabool, N., Mariadass, M. E. A., & Kashef, S. H. (2012). Investigating Malaysian ESL students' writing problems on conventions, punctuation, and language use at secondary school level. *Journal of Studies in Education*, 2(3).
- Hinkel, E. (2013). Research findings on teaching grammar for academic writing. *English Teaching*, 68(4), 3–21. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.15858/engtea.68.4.201312.3>
- Juanda, M. R., & Kurniawan, E. (2020). A comparison of rhetorical moves in students' undergraduate thesis abstracts, 509(Icollite), 443–448. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.201215.070>
- Kanoksilapatham, B. (2005). Rhetorical structure of biochemistry research articles. *English for Specific Purposes*, 24(3), 269–292. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2004.08.003>
- Krashen, S.D. (1981). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. California: University of Southern California press.
- Martínez, Lahuerta, A. C. (2016). Syntactic complexity in secondary level English writing: Differences among writers enrolled on bilingual and non-bilingual programmes. *Porta Linguarum*, 28.
- Maher, F., & Al-Khasawneh, S. (2016). A genre analysis of research article abstracts written by native and non-native speakers of English. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 4(1), 1-13. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/312041134>
- Mubshirah, D., Pasaribu, G. R., Lubis, M. H., Saragih, E., & Sofyan, R. (2023).



- Sentence complexity analysis in selected students' scientific papers: A closer look on abstract section. *E-Structural (English Studies on Translation Culture, Literature, and Linguistics)*, 6(01), 70–83. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.33633/es.v6i01.8080>
- Nunan, D., Terrell, T. D., & Brown, H. D. (2003). *Practical English language teaching* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Mc Graw Hill.
- Pratiwi, S. N., & Kurniawan, E. (2021). Rhetorical move and genre knowledge development of english and indonesian abstracts: A comparative analysis. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 8(3), 885–900. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v8i3.21038>
- 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. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210914.007>
- Rahmi, M., Saun, S., & Adnan, A. (2016). A study of sentence types on the writing of English department students of Universitas Negeri Padang in academic year 2014. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 5(1), 98–104.
- Saragih, W., & Hutajulu, C. (2020). Types of sentences used by male and female writers in journal article abstracts. *LingLit Journal Scientific Journal for Linguistics and Literature*, 1(1), 1-11.
- Warriner, J. E., & Griffith, F. (1969). *English grammar and composition*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World.