

## AN ANALYSIS OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' ABILITY AND THEIR DIFFICULTIES IN IDENTIFYING SIMPLE, COMPOUND, COMPLEX, AND COMPOUND-COMPLEX SENTENCES

Surya Maulana<sup>1</sup>, Yuli Markhamah<sup>2</sup>, Ahmad Jailani<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>English Study Program of STAIN Bengkalis

Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (STAIN) Bengkalis

Jl. Lembaga, Bengkalis. Riau 28711 Phone/fax. (+62766) 8001050, Indonesia

e-mail: maulanasurya271@gmail.com, yulimarkhamahh@gmail.com,  
ahmadjay26@gmail.com

**Abstract :** *This paper discusses the result of an analyzing the ability of undergraduate students about the difficulty of identifying simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence. A descriptive quantitative approach and a descriptive qualitative approach is used in this study. Descriptive quantitative is used to see the students' score test in analyzing simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence. Descriptive qualitative are used to see the result of students interview in their difficulty of identifying simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence. This study shows that student average is 11.84 from 20 point, the median is 12 from 20 point, and the range is 6 (as a lower score) and 17 (as a highest score) from 20 point. Most of the students still have a difficulty in identifying the formation of simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence. Especially because they still don't understand about connectors in the four types of sentences, such as subordinate connectors. Therefore students are required to practice writing in order to make it easier forming a simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, and compound-complex sentence.*

**Keywords:** *simple, compound, complex, ability.*

### INTRODUCTION

Teaching English cannot be separated from teaching grammar. Teaching English to students generally includes four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, teaching grammar is an integral part of teaching the four

skills (Suryani & Fitria, 2022).

Therefore, it becomes a question for teachers whether teaching grammar is still needed in the aspect of teaching English (Fitria, 2021).

A sentence is a group of word at least consisting of a subject and predicative which propose an idea

(Hardika, 2014). It a sentence can be formed with conjunctions, and contains meaning. According to Rozakis (2003) there are four types of sentences in English: simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence, compound-complex sentence. A simple sentence is a meaning that can stand alone (main clause) and has at least one object and one predicate. Compound sentences are those formed by combining two main sentences (independent/main clause) and making a conjunction. Complex sentences are those that consist of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses (clauses that cannot stand alone). Complex-compound sentences are sentences formed by two independent clauses and one or more compound clauses, complex-compound sentences are a combination of compound sentences and complex sentences (Dahlan & Thais, 2017: 93-100).

The relationship between these sentences is the structure and arrangement of words in a simple sentence, then it can be a sentence full of clauses such as compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Without simple sentences, other

sentences cannot be formed, each sentence is interrelated because this type of sentence contains grammar which then together to form sentences that have meaning (Sari, et al., 2018).

Research on students' ability to identify sentences has also been carried out by several researches previously. First, Mehmet Demirezena (2012) who stated that 55 first year student at Hacettepe University Ankara in Turkey, found it very difficult to understand sentences that became large with many elements, such as expanded compound sentences. In a sentence, ideas can be combined with several sentence elements by subordinating one clause to another, or used in a mixture of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Second, Nurmala Hendrawaty (2018), states that students have difficulty in writing simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentence patterns. The error that often occurs is compound-complex sentence patterns, compared to the other three sentence patterns. Compound-complex sentences are the most difficult sentence patterns because the errors that occur are 44.54%, compound sentences with an

error rate of 23.20%, then complex sentences with an error rate of 22.13%, and sentences that rarely occur are simple sentences with an error rate of 10.13%.

Previous researches have been conducted on students' difficulties in understanding compound sentences, and difficulties in writing sentences with simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex patterns. So, the researcher wants to know the students' ability and difficulties of understanding simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to describe the ability of undergraduate students in 3rd semester of the English language education Study Program of STAIN Bengkalis in identifying simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. Based on the analysis above, the researcher wants to see some of the problems in this study as follows:

1. What is students' ability in identifying simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences?

2. What kind of sentence is the most familiar and unfamiliar for students?
3. What factors influence students' ability in identifying types of sentences?

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **Related Theory**

First, Mehmet Demirezena (2012) who stated that 55 first year student at Hacettepe University Ankara in Turkey, found it very difficult to understand sentences that became large with many elements, such as expanded compound sentences. In a sentence, ideas can be combined with several sentence elements by subordinating one clause to another, or used in a mixture of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences.

Second, Nurmala Hendrawaty (2018), states that students have difficulty in writing simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentence patterns. The error that often occurs is compound-complex sentence patterns, compared to the other three sentence patterns. Compound-complex sentences are the most difficult sentence patterns because the errors

that occur are 44.54%, compound sentences with an error rate of 23.20%, then complex sentences with an error rate of 22.13%, and sentences that rarely occur are simple sentences with an error rate of 10.13%.

## **METHODOLOGY OF STUDY**

The method used in this research is descriptive quantitative research and descriptive qualitative research method. According to Sugiyono (2017), quantitative descriptive research methods are based on the philosophy of positivism, sampling techniques are generally carried out randomly, data collection uses research instruments, statistical data analysis with the aim of testing hypotheses has been determined and then described descriptively. While qualitative research methods according to Hesse-Biber (2016), qualitative research is a research method that utilizes qualitative data and is described descriptively, but qualitative research combines qualitative data and is described descriptively. However, numbers and percentages can be used by qualitative researchers as a technique to describe some of the important qualitative themes obtained through the collected data. So, this

study shows the amount and percentage of data based on responses on google forms. According to (Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata, 2016) descriptive research is a research method aimed at describing existing phenomena, which are currently or in the past. This research does not manipulate or change the independent variables, but describes a condition as it is. The description of conditions can be individual or group, and uses numbers.

The collection method used a test and an interview. The test is a research data collection method that serves to measure a person's ability (Sohilait, 2020). Furthermore, according to (Sugiyono, 2017) Interview is used as a data collection technique if the researcher wants to conduct a preliminary study to find problems that must be investigated, and also if the researcher wants to know things from respondents who are more in-depth and the number of respondents is small. This data collection technique is based on self-reports, or at least on personal knowledge and/or beliefs. Type of the test is we used document checklist. The way we did this document checklist was by doing act of reading. Reading or immersion, as well

as coding, indexing, and writing research memos are tools for analysing data in research about English writing (Blakeslee & Fleischer, 2007, p. 172). The possible answers related to their opinions or experiences with simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences. A total of 14 3rd semester students from the English Tadris program at STAIN Bengkalis. The researcher gives a test in the form of document checklist. There are 20 questions that students must answer on the correct answer.

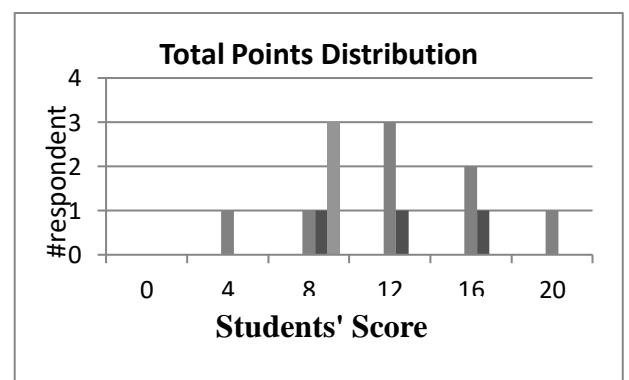
The method used in this research is a descriptive quantitative approach and a qualitative descriptive approach. Quantitative descriptive is used to describe students' ability to identify sentences through the number of results from the test where the researcher gets an overview of the conditions according to the facts that appear for comparison. Descriptive data analysis in this qualitative research is in the form of the process of analyzing, describing and summarizing knowing the difficulties experienced by students in identifying simple, compound, complex, and complex sentences from the data obtained

through the interview process and direct observation in the field. Data analysis uses three qualitative analysis steps such as the data presented by Miles et al (2013), including data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Which is used in further research in displaying data, researchers describe the results of research that have been reduced previously in the form of graphs, tables, or pictures and explain them in descriptions so that conclusions can be drawn.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Result**

This study was to determine the students' ability to identify simple, compound, complex, and compound sentences and to find out their opinion about these sentences. The following results from student test scores on multiple choice questions can be seen:



**Chart 1. Student Test Scores Based On Distributed Test Responses**

In this study, as many as 13 3rd semester students of the English Tadris study program at STAIN Bengkalis participated in the research. The researcher gave a test in the form of multiple choice questions by checking the correct answer. Based on the description it can be seen that:

**Table 1. Student Test Scores Based On Distributed Test Responses**

No.	Total Student	Correct Answer	Score
1.	1 Student	✓	6 Points
2.	1 Student	✓	8 Points
3.	1 Student	✓	9 Points
4.	3 Student	✓	11 Points
5.	3 Student	✓	12 Points
6.	1 Student	✓	13 Points
7.	2 Student	✓	16 Points
8.	1 Student	✓	17 Points

Based on the answers above, it shows that the students' average is 11.84 out of 20 points, the median is 12 out of 20 points, and the students' scores range from 6 (as the lowest score) to 17 (as the highest score).

Interviews were conducted to determine students' understanding of simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences, at STAIN Bengkalis. Interviews were conducted orally with 8 structured questions.

Interviews helped researchers to reach more specific data regarding the preparation of simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences, as well as connecting sentences as a whole.

In this section, student statements are discussed further about the preparation of simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences, as well as connecting sentences. There were 11 students who participated in the interview. The results are presented from eleven students with eighth questions based on the following interview:

The first respondent said that,

- a. "Dependent Clause is a sentence that have a coordinating conjunction,
- b. Independent Clause is a sentence that haven't coordinating conjunction,
- c. Coordinate Connectors is a word that connect two sentence,
- d. Subordinate Connectors is a word that have two dependent clause,
- e. Simple Sentence is a sentence that only have one clause,

- f. Compound Sentence is a sentence that consist of one independent clause and one dependent clause,
- g. Complex Sentence is a sentence that consist of one independent clause and two dependent clause equipped with subordinate connectors.
- h. Compound-Complex Sentence is a sentence that have two dependent clause and two independent clause equipped with subordinate connectors ”.

Second respondent said that,

- a. “Dependent Clause is a sentence that state the direct object,
- b. Independent Clause is a sentence that state the indirect object,
- c. Coordinate Connectors is a word that connect a sentence,
- d. Subordinate Connectors is a word that express the linking words of cause and effect,
- e. Simple Sentence is a sentence that consist a Subject + Object + Predicate,
- f. Compound Sentence is a sentence that consist of independent clause and dependent clause,

- g. Complex Sentence is a sentence that consist of two independent clause and one dependent clause,
- h. Compound-Complex Sentence is a sentence that have two dependent clause and one independent clause equipped with subordinate connectors ”

Third respondent said that,

- a. “Dependent Clause is a sentence singular,
- b. The third respondent don’t know,
- c. Coordinate Connectors is a sentence connector,
- d. Subordinate Connectors is an opening sentence,
- e. Simple Sentence is a sentence that consist a Subject + Verb,
- f. Compound Sentence is a sentence that consist of dependent clause and independent clause,
- g. Complex Sentence is a sentence that consist of two independent clause and connected with Coordinate Connectors,
- h. Compound-Complex Sentence is a sentence that have two dependent clause and one independent clause equipped with conjunction ”

Fourth respondent said that,

- a. “Dependent Clause is a sentence that can’t stand alone,
- b. Independent Clause is a sentence that can stand alone,
- c. Coordinate Connectors is a connecting sentence,
- d. -
- e. Simple Sentence is a casual sentence,
- f. -
- g. Complex Sentence is a perfect sentence and have a conjunction
- h. -

Fifth respondent said that,

- a. “Dependent Clause is a sentence that can stand alone,
- b. Independent Clause is a sentence that can’t stand alone,
- c. Coordinate Connectors is a connecting sentence,
- d. –
- e. Simple Sentence is a casual sentence,
- f. –
- g. Complex Sentence is a combining sentence
- h. -

Sixth respondent said that,

- a. “Dependent Clause is a clause that can’t stand alone,

- b. Independent Clause is a clause that can stand alone,
- c. Coordinate Connectors is a conjunction word that used as a clarification of a sentence to become a complete perfect sentence , for example but, so, and, etc,
- d. Subordinate Connectors can connecting two different sentences, for example: if, while, when, and etc which commonly used between two independent clauses,
- e. Simple Sentence is a complete sentence with a Subject + Verb + Object,
- f. Compound Sentence is a sentence that consist of two independent clause and linked by coordinate connector,
- g. Complex Sentence is a sentence that consist of one dependent clause and one independent clause,
- h. Compound-Complex Sentence is a sentence that have two dependent clause and one independent clause”.

Seventh respondent said that,

- a. “Dependent Clause is a clause that can’t stand alone,



- b. Independent Clause is a clause that can stand alone,
  - c. Coordinate Connectors is a conjunction word between two sentences,
  - d. Subordinate Connectors is a conjunction at the beginning of the sentence,
  - e. Simple Sentence is a sentence with subject and verb,
  - f. Compound Sentence is a sentence that consist of one independent clause and one or more dependent clause connecting by subordinate connectors,
  - g. Complex Sentence is a sentence that consist of one dependent clause and two independent clause connecting by coordinate connectors,
  - h. Compound-Complex Sentence is a sentence that have two independent clause and two dependent clause equipped by subordinate connectors”.
- c. Coordinate Connectors such as; and, of, but, yet, for,
  - d. Don’t know,
  - e. Simple Sentence is a sentence that consist a Subject + Verb + Object,
  - f. Compound Sentence is a sentence that have conjunction but the subject is only one type consist of two independent clause and two dependent clause,
  - g. Complex Sentence is a sentence that has at least one dependent clause and two independent clause,
  - h. Compound-Complex Sentence is a sentence that have two independent clause and one dependent clause”.

Eight respondent said that,

- a. “Dependent Clause is a sentence that can’t stand alone,
- b. Independent Clause is a sentence that can stand alone,,

Ninth respondent said that

- a. “Dependent Clause is a sentence that can’t stand alone,
- b. Independent Clause is a sentence that can stand alone,
- c. Coordinate Connectors is a connecting words, phrases, clause, and sentence
- d. I Don’t know,
- e. Simple Sentence is a sentence with Subject + Verb + Object,

- f. Compound Sentence is a sentence that consist independent clause,
- g. Complex Sentence is a sentence that consist one independent clause and two dependent clause connecting by conjunction,
- h. Don't know".

Tenth respondent said that,

- a. "Forget,
- b. forget too,
- c. Coordinate Connectors is a connecting words,
- d. Don't know,
- e. Simple Sentence is a causal sentence,
- f. Compound Sentence is a sentence that consist simple sentence and complex sentence connecting by conjunction,
- g. Complex Sentence is a sentence that consist simple sentence and complex sentence but no conjunction,
- h. Don't know".

One of the respondent said that, "Dependent Clause is a clause that can't stand alone,

## DISCUSSION

A sentence is a collection of words that at least consists of a subject

and a predicate and has a complete meaning. The subject is the topic being discussed, it can be in the form of a person, thing, place, or situation. The predicate is the thing that explains the subject. Based on the shape, there are four types of sentences, namely simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences, and compound-complex sentences.

Jeanne Dawson in his book entitled *The Writing Construction Manual* stated There are threebasic of sentences such as simple sentence, complex sentence, compound sentence. According to Brandon (2012), The four kinds of basic sentences in English are simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. Oshima and Hogue (2008) said, The kind of sentences is determined by the kind of clauses used to form it.

According to Brandon (2012, p. 27) argued sentence is clasified into four types namely: (1) simple sentence, (2) compound sentence, (3) complex sentence and (4) compound complex sentence. Simple sentence, known as a complete sentence, is a sentence containing a subject and a verb which may contain phrases and have more than one subject or verb. A compound

sentence is one in which there are two or more control units (simple sentence). It is usually linked by a coordinating conjunction. The coordinate conjunctions used in compound sentence are for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so. A complex sentence is a sentence including a dependent clause linked to an independent clause by a subordinating conjunction of some kinds to form a complete sentence. A compound-complex sentence is known as a sentence consisting of two or more independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses.

The results of the multiple choice test of STAIN Bengkalis students showed that the students' average score was 11.84 out of 20 points, a median of 12 out of 20 points, and the students' range scores between the 6 (as lower score) up to 17 (as highest score).

The results are presented from eight questions based on the following interview:

- a. There are seven students who still remember and understand the dependent clause.
- b. There are eight students who still remember and understand the independent clause.

- c. There are nine students who still remember and understand the coordinate connector.
- d. There are four students who still remember and understand the subordinate connector.
- e. There are ten students who still remember and understand the simple sentence.
- f. There are five students who still remember and understand compound sentences.
- g. There are seven students who still remember and understand complex sentences.
- h. There are five students who still remember and understand compound-complex sentences.

Most of them still find it difficult to remember and understand the four forms of sentences (simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences) and their connecting words. It can be seen that the majority of students can explain significantly about simple sentences. However, a minority of them are still unfamiliar with connecting words, especially subordinate connectors. Students are still confused to distinguish between subordinate connectors and coordinate

connectors. Likewise, some of them still have difficulty explaining what a compound sentence, compound-complex sentence and the elements of its formation are.

An easy way to identify the four types of sentences in English namely;

- 1). simple sentence, students must understand the elements of its formation, namely by combining subject + predicate + object.
- 2) compound sentence, namely by combining two independent clauses connected to one another with a coordinate connector ( for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).
- 3) Complex Sentence, namely by combining independent clause sentences with dependent clauses or vice versa by adding conjunctions such as if, unless, when, before, although, who, that, because, and others.
- 4) Compound - complex sentence is made from two independent clauses and one or more dependent clause.

To be able to make simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences properly and correctly. Students must be able to master the elements of its formation. Such as mastering dependent clauses,

namely sentences that cannot stand alone, independent clauses, namely sentences that can stand alone, coordinating connectors, namely, connecting words that can connect two sentences that separate them, consisting of (for, and, nor, but, or, yet), so) and subordinate connectors are connecting words at the beginning of sentences consisting of ( if, unless, when, before, although, who, that, because, and others).

It can be concluded that students are able to understand simple sentences, but they still do not know and understand conjunctions, especially subordinate linking and coordinating conjunctions, so this is what makes students have difficulty understanding subsequent sentences contained in compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the research that has been done, conclusions can be drawn based on student analysis data which shows that the average student is 11.84, the median is 12, and the score ranges

from 6 to 17. Some of the difficulties encountered such as; Difficulty understanding and remembering connecting words, especially subordinate connectors, as well as difficulties in analyzing compound sentences and compound-complex sentences.

### SUGGESTION

Students need to learn to make simple sentences, compound sentences, complex sentences and compound-complex sentences more actively. Students must also be given a material understanding of the elements that make up the four sentence forms, such as dependent clause, independent clause. For further students also need to work on some simple questions regarding conjunctions, especially coordinate connectors and subordinate connectors.

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