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## An Analysis of Sentence Types and Grammatical Errors in Paragraph Writing by Second-Year English Majors at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University, Thailand

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### Abstract

This study examined the types of sentences used and the grammatical errors found in paragraph writing by second-year English major students at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University. The research focused on a sample of 20 paragraphs, selected through purposive sampling from a total population of 40 paragraphs submitted by the students. A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative analysis of sentence and error frequencies with qualitative document analysis and a coding technique to interpret writing patterns. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distributions to identify the prevalence of sentence types and grammatical issues. The analysis revealed that simple sentences were the most frequently used across all paragraph types, reflecting a preference for clarity and ease of construction. Compound and complex sentences were more commonly used in reason paragraphs, indicating students' efforts to express more sophisticated ideas. Grammatical errors particularly in subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and sentence structure were prevalent, highlighting areas in need of instructional support. These findings underscore the importance of teaching a wider variety of sentence structures and addressing persistent grammatical issues to enhance students' overall writing proficiency.

**Keywords :** English Sentence Types, Grammatical Errors, Paragraph Writing, Writing Proficiency

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## Introduction

English language proficiency is commonly defined by four core skills: speaking, writing, listening, and reading (Oxford. 1990). Among these, writing is increasingly recognized as a crucial component in both academic and professional settings (Hyland. 2019). For university students majoring in English, writing is not only a fundamental academic requirement but also a vital communication skill that must be continuously developed (Richards & Renandya. 2002). Writing is often considered the most complex skill to master, as it requires the simultaneous control of various cognitive and linguistic systems.

At the university level, English majors must recognize the interdependence between grammar and writing. Effective writing relies on a strong grammatical foundation. As Alsalamy (2022) notes, through writing, students learn to construct words, phrases, clauses, and complete sentences.

When composing a sentence, it is essential to consider several elements, including grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization. Of these, grammar is particularly vital, as it governs the formation and clarity of written expression.

Grammar refers to the system and structure of a language, encompassing the rules that dictate how words are combined to form meaningful sentences (Debata. 2013). It serves as the invisible framework that supports the clarity, coherence, and logical flow of written communication. Without a solid understanding of grammar, students are likely to struggle with constructing accurate and meaningful texts.

In sentence construction, students have access to various types of sentences to communicate their ideas effectively. Choosing the appropriate sentence type is essential for conveying messages clearly and ensuring grammatical accuracy. The four primary sentence types—simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex—offer different ways to structure thoughts and develop ideas within paragraphs.

While students often rely on simple sentences due to their ease of use and straightforwardness, these consist of only one independent clause and may limit the complexity of ideas being expressed. To improve clarity, coherence, and reader engagement, students should also be encouraged to use compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. A varied use of sentence types allows for richer and more nuanced expression, which is especially important in academic writing.

To compose a coherent and meaningful paragraph, it is essential for students to select appropriate sentence types and apply accurate grammatical structures (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman. 1999). Mastery of grammar is fundamental to effective writing, as it constitutes the structural framework of a language and comprises the rules that govern how words are organized into sentences (Swan. 2005). Students must carefully examine each sentence for core grammatical elements, including tense, word order, determiners, and connectors (Eastwood. 2002). These elements work together to create meaning, and if any of them are misused, the intended message may become unclear or distorted (Leech & Svartvik. 2002).

At the Division of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University, English major students are required to enroll in a paragraph writing course during their second year, prior to undertaking an essay writing course. In this course, students are introduced to the fundamental structure of a paragraph, typically consisting of an introduction, body, and conclusion. This structure applies across various writing modes—whether narrating, describing, explaining reasons, or presenting processes—and each component serves a vital function in effectively conveying meaning to the reader.

In order to express their thoughts more effectively in paragraph writing, students are encouraged to use a variety of sentence types, ranging from simple to complex structures, to enrich the meaning of their writing (Ur. 1996). In practice, however, students most often rely on simple sentences due to their

ease of use (Eastwood. 2002). A simple sentence contains one independent clause with a subject and a verb, expressing a complete thought (Azar. 2007). For example: "The earth goes round the sun." While students occasionally use compound sentences, these are less frequent as they involve joining two independent clauses—often with a coordinating conjunction or semicolon—which can be more challenging (Swan. 2005; Leech & Svartvik. 2002). For instance: "I went to university, but my friends went to the cinema."

More advanced structures, such as complex and compound-complex sentences, are seldom used due to their syntactic complexity (Ur. 1996). A complex sentence consists of an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses introduced by subordinating conjunctions or relative pronouns (Eastwood. 2002). For example: "We missed our bus because we were late." A compound-complex sentence includes at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses, making it the most difficult structure for students to master (Leech & Svartvik. 2002). An example of this type is: "Sompong didn't come to the party because he was sick, so his friends were not happy."

In this study, students' paragraph writing will be examined to analyze the types of sentences they use and to assess the grammatical accuracy of each sentence. This analysis will assist the researcher, who is also a lecturer of a paragraph writing course, as well as other instructors, in identifying common errors that need to be addressed and retaught. The findings aim to contribute to the improvement of students' writing abilities, particularly in constructing well-structured and grammatically accurate paragraphs.

## Research Objectives

1. To investigate the types of sentences used in paragraph writing by second-year students at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University.
2. To analyze the errors made in each type of sentence in paragraph writing by second-year students at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University.

## Research Questions

1. What types of sentences are commonly used in paragraph writing by second-year students at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University?
2. How do grammatical errors vary across different types of sentences used by second-year students at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University?

## Literature Review

### Paragraph Writing

A paragraph is a fundamental organizational unit in writing where a group of related sentences develops a single main idea (Oshima & Hogue. 1991). Structurally, a well-formed paragraph comprises three essential components: a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. The topic sentence is paramount, as it establishes the central point and provides a "controlling idea" that directs the paragraph's development (Graff & Birkenstein. 2006). Supporting sentences follow to provide evidence, examples, or explanations, forming the bulk of the paragraph (Rozakis. 2003), while the concluding sentence summarizes or restates the main idea. In academic practice, a paragraph typically contains approximately five to eleven sentences, including three to nine supporting sentences, depending on the complexity of the topic (Rotarwut. 2017).

### Types of Paragraphs

Academic writing encompasses various paragraph types, including descriptive, narrative, expository, process, reason-result, and opinion paragraphs (Boardman. 2008). This study specifically analyzes three types:

- Descriptive paragraphs, which utilize sensory details to portray subjects vividly (Azar. 2007).
- Process paragraphs, which outline chronological steps to complete a task (Leech & Svartvik. 2002).
- Reasons paragraphs, which explore causes and motivations, thereby fostering critical thinking and analytical skills (Ur. 1996).

### Types of Sentences

To ensure clarity, coherence, and stylistic variety, writers must employ a range of sentence structures (Lunsford & Ruszkiewicz. 2007). These include: *Simple Sentences*: One independent clause expressing a single idea (Oshima & Hogue. 2006). *Compound Sentences*: Two or more independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions or semicolons (Hacker & Sommers. 2011). *Complex Sentences*: One independent clause combined with at least one dependent clause to provide depth (Murphy. 1985). *Compound-Complex Sentences*: A sophisticated structure featuring at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses (Oshima & Hogue. 2006; Lunsford & Ruszkiewicz. 2016).

### Grammar in Paragraph Writing

Grammatical precision is vital for effective communication, ensuring logical flow and writer credibility (Hacker. 2020). Key elements such as sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and punctuation are fundamental to clarity (Williams. 2019). Errors in these areas, particularly misplaced modifiers or inconsistent tenses, can obscure meaning and disrupt the reader's comprehension (Swan. 2005; Azar. 2017). Furthermore, the strategic use of transition words is essential for guiding the reader through the paragraph's logical progression (Murray. 2013).

### Errors in Paragraph Writing

Writing is a cognitively demanding skill that requires more deliberate linguistic control than speaking (Norrish. 1983; Liu & Braine. 2005). Consequently, students often struggle with grammatical accuracy and syntactic complexity. This study investigates errors across ten key dimensions: sentence structure, punctuation, verb tense, subject-verb agreement, pronoun usage, modifiers, sentence variety, parallelism, conciseness, and transitions. Analyzing these errors is crucial for enhancing instructional strategies and improving students' overall writing proficiency in academic and professional contexts.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, primarily utilizing a quantitative framework to analyze sentence types and grammatical errors in paragraph writing. The research is classified as applied research, following a systematic process of data collection, document analysis, and conclusion drawing (Yusuf. 2007).

### Population and Sampling

The population consisted of 40 paragraphs submitted as midterm examination tests by second-year English major students. Using purposive sampling (Beach. 1992), a sample of 20 paragraphs (50%) was selected based on predefined criteria. This sampling method ensured a constant variable among participants with similar academic backgrounds (Fraenkel & Wallen. 2008).

### Data Collection

The primary data were authentic writing samples, which reflect natural writing contexts and enhance the study's ecological validity (Hyland. 2009). Data were collected through direct observation and document analysis, guided by structured checklists (Subana & Sudrajat. 2001; Yusuf. 2007).

### Data Analysis and Coding

Data were analyzed using a coding technique and taxonomic analysis (Gunawan. 2016). The analysis involved a systematic process of reading, coding, and indexing (Blakeslee & Fleischer. 2007).

- Sentence Types (S): Categorized into four types: Simple (S1), Compound (S2), Complex (S3), and Compound-complex (S4).

- Grammatical Errors (G): Classified into ten categories: Sentence structure (G1), Punctuation (G2), Verb tense (G3), Subject-verb agreement (G4), Pronoun usage (G5), Modifiers (G6), Sentence variety (G7), Parallelism (G8), Clarity and conciseness (G9), and Transition words (G10).

### Statistical Analysis

The frequency and percentage of sentence types and grammatical errors were calculated using the following formulas:

- Percentage of Sentence Types:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\sum \text{sentences of each code}}{\sum \text{total sentences in the sample}} \times 100$$

- Percentage of Grammatical Errors:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\sum \text{each error type found}}{\sum \text{total errors identified}} \times 100$$

### Findings

The findings of this research address the two primary objectives: to investigate the types of sentences used in paragraph writing, and to analyze the grammatical errors occurring in each sentence type used by second-year students at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University.

A frequency data percentage analysis was employed to examine the types of sentences found across all student writing samples, as well as to analyze the frequency and nature of grammatical errors occurring in each sentence type.

#### 1. Types of Sentences Used in Paragraph Writing

The sentence types were categorized into four groups: S1: Simple sentence, S2: Compound sentence, S3: Complex sentence, and S4: Compound-complex sentence.

The analysis of the sentence types including Simple Sentence, Compound Sentence, Complex Sentence, and Compound-Complex Sentences written in different types of paragraphs of Descriptive, Process, and Reason paragraphs can be summarized in the following table.

**Table 1** Analysis of Sentences Types Across the Three Paragraph Categories

| Types of Paragraphs                                             | Types of Sentences |        |     |        |    |        |    |        | Σ5  |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-----|--------|----|--------|----|--------|-----|
|                                                                 | S1                 |        | S2  |        | S3 |        | S4 |        |     |
|                                                                 | Σ1                 | %      | Σ1  | %      | Σ1 | %      | Σ1 | %      |     |
| Descriptive paragraphs                                          | 180                | 34.35% | 30  | 29.41% | 20 | 29.85% | 9  | 28.13% | 239 |
| Process paragraphs                                              | 170                | 32.44% | 32  | 31.37% | 22 | 32.83% | 8  | 25.00% | 232 |
| Reason paragraphs                                               | 174                | 33.21% | 40  | 39.22% | 25 | 37.31% | 15 | 46.88% | 254 |
| Total number of sentences in samples of each type of paragraphs | 524                | 100%   | 102 | 100%   | 67 | 100%   | 32 | 100%   | 725 |

Note:  $\Sigma 1$  = the number of sentences written under the simple sentence category  $\Sigma 2$  = the number of sentences written under the compound sentence category  $\Sigma 3$  = the number of sentences written under the complex sentence category  $\Sigma 4$  = the number of sentences written under the compound-complex sentence category  $\Sigma 5$  = the number of all types of sentences within each type of paragraphs

This table effectively shows the distribution of sentence types in each paragraph type (Descriptive, Process, and Reason). It also highlights the overall sentence distribution across the samples, providing a clear comparison between the paragraph types.

### Analysis of Sentence Types Across Three Paragraph Categories

From the data presented in Table 1, the analysis of sentence types across the three paragraph categories—descriptive, process, and reason paragraphs—revealed distinct patterns in sentence usage.

In the descriptive paragraphs (239 sentences total), simple sentences accounted for 34.35%, making them the most common type. This was followed by compound sentences at 29.41%, complex sentences at 29.85%, and compound-complex sentences at 28.13%.

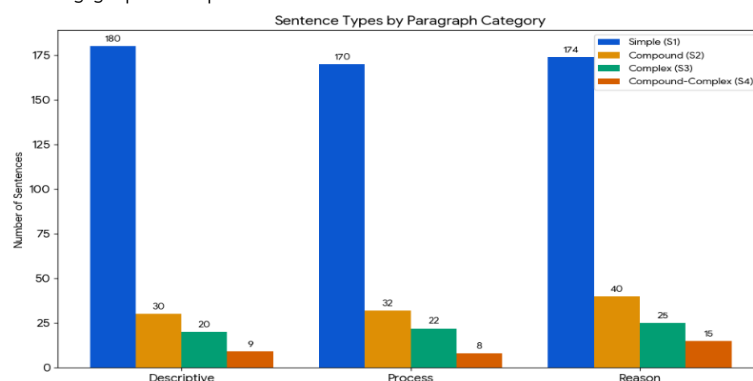
In the process paragraphs (232 sentences total), simple sentences represented 32.44%, again the most frequent type, while compound sentences made up 31.37%, complex sentences accounted for 32.83%, and compound-complex sentences represented 25.00%.

In the reason paragraphs (254 sentences total), simple sentences formed 33.21% of the total, compound sentences comprised 39.22%, complex sentences made up 37.31%, and compound-complex sentences accounted for 46.88%.

Overall, across all three paragraph types, simple sentences were the most frequently used sentence type, with compound and complex sentences also appearing in notable proportions. In total, 725 sentences were analyzed, with simple sentences representing 33.21%, compound sentences at 31.37%, complex sentences at 32.83%, and compound-complex sentences at 25.00%.

The analysis focused on how these sentence types were distributed across three paragraph types: Descriptive Paragraphs, Process Paragraphs, and Reason Paragraphs.

The distribution of sentence types found in all descriptive, process and reason paragraphs is illustrated in the following graph (Graph 1):



**Graph 1** Sentence Types Used in Descriptive, Process and Reason Paragraphs

### Analysis of Sentence Structure Distribution Across Academic Paragraph Types

The structural analysis of sentences within three distinct paragraph types—Descriptive, Process, and Reason—reveals a consistent pattern in linguistic choices. Across a total sample of 725 sentences, Simple Sentences (S1) emerged as the predominant structure, accounting for the vast majority of the data. However, the distribution of more complex forms, including Compound (S2), Complex (S3), and Compound-Complex (S4) sentences, fluctuates depending on the communicative purpose of the paragraph.

### 1. Dominance of Simple Sentences (S1):

The data indicates an overwhelming reliance on simple sentence structures across all categories. -Descriptive Paragraphs showed the highest density of S1 at 75.31% (180 sentences). -Process Paragraphs followed closely at 73.27% (170 sentences). -Reason Paragraphs recorded the lowest—though still dominant—proportion of S1 at 68.50% (174 sentences).

This heavy lean toward S1 suggests that writers prioritize clarity and information density. In descriptive and procedural writing, simple sentences allow for a direct, step-by-step presentation of facts or attributes, reducing the cognitive load on the reader. However, from an academic standpoint, this may also indicate a "safety-first" approach, where writers avoid complex syntax to minimize grammatical errors.

### 2. Comparative Analysis of Advanced Structures (S2, S3, and S4)

While simple sentences dominate, the distribution of advanced structures provides insight into the cognitive demands of different writing tasks: -Reason Paragraphs: The Peak of Complexity. Writing that requires justification and logical deduction naturally necessitates more sophisticated linking. Consequently, "Reason" paragraphs utilized the highest number of Compound-Complex sentences (S4) at 5.94% (15 sentences) and Compound sentences (S2) at 17.32% (44 sentences). This suggests that explaining "why" requires a higher degree of coordination and subordination than simply describing "what." -Process Paragraphs: Focus on Sequential Flow. In procedural writing, there is a slightly higher frequency of Complex sentences (S3) compared to descriptive writing (9.48% vs. 8.37%). This reflects the need to express temporal relationships (e.g., using "after," "while," or "when") to connect sequential steps. -Descriptive Paragraphs: Minimal Variation. This category exhibited the lowest structural variety, with Compound-Complex sentences making up only 3.77% of the total. The focus remains largely on isolated attributes rather than the synthesis of complex ideas.

### 3. Pedagogical and Stylistic Implications

The results highlight a significant structural gap in student writing. The minimal use of Compound-Complex sentences (ranging from only 3.45% to 5.94%) suggests a potential ceiling in the writers' linguistic repertoire. While the high frequency of simple sentences ensures readability, the lack of variety can lead to "choppy" prose that lacks sophisticated flow and rhythm.

For academic publishing and instruction, these findings underscore the necessity of targeted interventions. Writers should be encouraged to move beyond "straightforwardness" toward sentence-combining techniques. Enhancing the use of S2, S3, and S4 structures would allow for a more nuanced expression of relationships between ideas, ultimately elevating the academic quality and professional tone of the writing.

In conclusion, the empirical data across all three paragraph types—Descriptive, Process, and Reason—consistently demonstrates a student preference for simpler syntactical structures. Even in Reason paragraphs, where the cognitive demand for logical linking is highest, the prevalence of simple sentences (68.50%) underscores a tendency toward straightforward writing. This pattern likely reflects a dual reality: while it ensures clarity and minimizes grammatical risk, it also indicates a significant pedagogical challenge in employing advanced sentence constructions. Therefore, transitioning from functional simplicity to academic sophistication remains a critical milestone for developing writers to achieve a more professional and nuanced academic tone.

### 2. Grammatical errors occurred in Sentences of Paragraph Writing

In this study, grammatical errors in paragraph writing were categorized into ten types: sentence structure (G1), punctuation (G2), verb tense (G3), subject-verb agreement (G4), pronoun usage (G5), modifiers (G6), sentence variety (G7), parallelism (G8), clarity and conciseness (G9), and transition words (G10). The

focus of the research was to analyze 40 descriptive, process and reason paragraphs and identify the frequency of these errors.

### Grammar Errors in Descriptive, Process and Reason Paragraphs

A total of forty descriptive, process and reason paragraphs were analyzed, focusing on ten categories of grammatical errors (coded as G1 through G10). The results of this analysis are presented in the table below.

**Table 2** The Frequency of grammar errors (Coded: G1-G10) found in descriptive, process and reason paragraphs

| Code | Grammatical Category   | Descriptive (n=40) | Process (n=40) | Reason (n=40) |
|------|------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|
| G1   | Sentence Structure     | 77.50%             | 72.50%         | 80.00%        |
| G2   | Punctuation            | 37.50%             | 40.00%         | 45.00%        |
| G3   | Verb Tense             | 80.00%             | 75.00%         | 77.50%        |
| G4   | Subject-Verb Agreement | 85.00%             | 77.50%         | 75.00%        |
| G5   | Pronoun Usage          | 37.50%             | 30.00%         | 25.00%        |
| G6   | Modifiers              | 57.50%             | 50.00%         | 62.50%        |
| G7   | Sentence Variety       | 70.00%             | 45.00%         | 57.50%        |
| G8   | Parallelism            | 57.50%             | 55.00%         | 60.00%        |
| G9   | Clarity & Conciseness  | 75.00%             | 50.00%         | 62.50%        |
| G10  | Transition Words       | 52.50%             | 62.50%         | 60.00%        |

### Comparative Analysis of Grammatical Errors Across Paragraph Types

#### 1. Overview of Grammatical Performance

The comprehensive analysis of 120 student-written paragraphs (40 samples each for Descriptive, Process, and Reason types) reveals significant grammatical challenges across ten distinct categories (G1–G10). The data indicates that while error frequencies vary by genre, certain foundational errors—specifically Subject-Verb Agreement (G4), Verb Tense (G3), and Sentence Structure (G1)—persist as the most critical impediments to academic writing proficiency.

#### 2. Genre-Specific Error Profiles

##### 2.1 Descriptive Paragraphs: Foundational Inconsistencies

In Descriptive writing, the highest frequency of errors occurred in Subject-Verb Agreement (G4) at 85% and Verb Tense (G3) at 80%. These findings suggest that when students focus on sensory details and characterization, they often lose control over the mechanical consistency of their sentences. Furthermore, Clarity and Conciseness (G9) posed a significant issue (75%), likely due to the use of wordy or redundant modifiers in an attempt to be descriptive.

##### 2.2 Process Paragraphs: Procedural Clarity and Transition Challenges

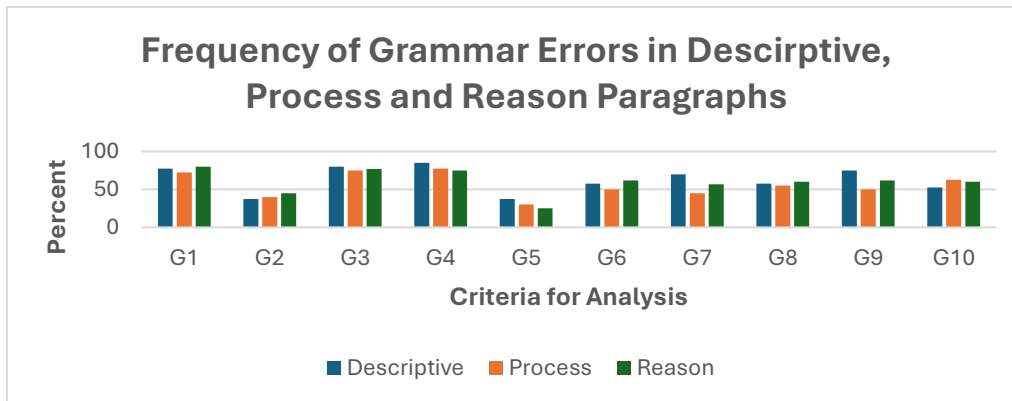
Writing procedural texts revealed a high reliance on Subject-Verb Agreement (G4, 77.5%) and Verb Tense (G3, 75%). Notably, Transition Words (G10) were problematic in 62.5% of the samples. This indicates that while students can list individual steps, they struggle to link them into a cohesive, flowing narrative. Sentence Structure (G1) errors remained high at 72.5%, reflecting difficulties in maintaining logical organization during step-by-step explanations.

##### 2.3 Reason Paragraphs: Syntactical Disorganization

Reason paragraphs exhibited the highest rate of Sentence Structure (G1) errors at 80%. This suggests that the cognitive demand of justifying an opinion or explaining a cause-effect relationship leads to more disorganized constructions. Unlike descriptive writing, where the focus is on nouns and

adjectives, reason paragraphs require complex logical linking, which also resulted in high error rates for Modifiers (G6, 62.5%), Parallelism (G8, 60%), and Transition Words (G10, 60%).

The table 2 above provides a detailed summary of the frequency and percentage of each grammatical error. For a visual representation of the frequency of errors in process paragraphs, refer to Graph 2 below.



Graph 2: The Frequency of grammar errors (Coded: G1-G10) found in descriptive, process and reason paragraphs

### Analysis of Grammar Errors in Descriptive, Process, and Reason Paragraphs

The analysis of grammatical errors across the three types of paragraphs—descriptive, process, and reason—reveals several recurring patterns in students' writing. Overall, the results indicate that sentence structure (G1), verb tense (G3), and subject-verb agreement (G4) were the most common grammatical errors across all paragraph types. These categories consistently showed high percentages, suggesting that students faced considerable difficulties in constructing grammatically accurate sentences and maintaining consistency in verb forms.

Among these categories, subject-verb agreement (G4) was the most frequent error in descriptive paragraphs (85%) and also appeared at a high rate in process paragraphs (77.5%) and reason paragraphs (75%). Similarly, verb tense (G3) errors were consistently high across the three writing types, with frequencies of 80% in descriptive paragraphs, 75% in process paragraphs, and 77.5% in reason paragraphs. These results indicate that students often struggled with selecting and maintaining appropriate verb forms when expressing ideas in different writing contexts.

Another major issue was sentence structure (G1), which appeared in 77.5% of descriptive paragraphs, 72.5% of process paragraphs, and 80% of reason paragraphs. The high frequency of this error suggests that many students experienced difficulties organizing ideas into clear and well-structured sentences. This issue was particularly prominent in reason paragraphs, where the complexity of presenting arguments and explanations may have increased the likelihood of structural errors.

In addition to these major error categories, several other grammatical aspects showed moderate frequencies across the three paragraph types. Modifiers (G6) and parallelism (G8) appeared in more than half of the paragraphs in most cases, indicating that students sometimes struggled with maintaining clear relationships between sentence elements and balancing sentence structures. Similarly, clarity and conciseness (G9) showed relatively high percentages, especially in descriptive (75%) and reason paragraphs (62.5%), suggesting that students often produced sentences that were either unclear or unnecessarily wordy.

Furthermore, sentence variety (G7) and transition words (G10) also contributed to the overall grammatical challenges. Sentence variety errors were particularly noticeable in descriptive paragraphs (70%), while transition word errors were more frequent in process (62.5%) and reason paragraphs (60%). These

findings indicate that students may have difficulties creating varied sentence patterns and effectively linking ideas to ensure smooth and coherent writing.

On the other hand, punctuation (G2) and pronoun usage (G5) showed comparatively lower frequencies of errors. Punctuation errors ranged from 37.5% to 45% across the paragraph types, while pronoun usage errors were the least frequent, with 37.5% in descriptive paragraphs, 30% in process paragraphs, and 25% in reason paragraphs. Although these issues were less common than other grammatical problems, they still contributed to occasional ambiguity and reduced clarity in students' writing.

In summary, the overall analysis demonstrates that students consistently encountered grammatical difficulties across all three types of paragraphs. The most significant challenges were related to subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and sentence structure, which affected the grammatical accuracy and coherence of their writing. These findings suggest that focused instruction in these areas may help students improve their grammatical competence and overall writing quality across different types of academic paragraphs.

## Discussions

This study investigated the types of sentences used and the grammatical errors found in paragraph writing among second-year students at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University. The findings provide insights into students' structural preferences and grammatical challenges across three paragraph types: descriptive, process, and reason paragraphs.

### Sentence Types in Paragraph Writing

The results revealed that *simple sentences were the most frequently used across all paragraph types*, indicating a strong tendency toward syntactic simplicity in students' writing. Simple sentences accounted for 75.31% of sentences in descriptive paragraphs, 73.27% in process paragraphs, and 68.50% in reason paragraphs. This pattern suggests that students tend to rely on structurally less complex sentences, possibly because they perceive them as easier to construct and less prone to grammatical errors.

The dominance of simple sentences in descriptive and process paragraphs may also be related to the communicative purposes of these paragraph types. Descriptive paragraphs typically aim to present clear images or descriptions, while process paragraphs focus on explaining sequences or procedures. In both cases, simple sentence structures may help convey information directly and clearly.

However, the results showed that *reason paragraphs contained a relatively higher proportion of compound (17.32%) and complex sentences (9.84%)* compared to the other paragraph types. This suggests that when students are required to present explanations or arguments, they tend to employ more syntactically complex structures in order to connect ideas and express logical relationships. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that more cognitively demanding writing tasks often require greater syntactic complexity (Hyland. 2006; Graham & Perin. 2007).

Despite this increase, the use of *compound-complex sentences remained relatively limited* across all paragraph types. This may indicate that students have limited confidence or proficiency in using more advanced sentence structures. Previous research on second-language writing has also shown that EFL learners often avoid syntactically complex constructions due to concerns about grammatical accuracy (Hyland. 2006). Consequently, while simple sentences contribute to clarity, excessive reliance on them may limit the development of more sophisticated academic writing skills.

### Grammatical Errors in Paragraph Writing

The analysis of grammatical errors across the three paragraph types revealed several recurring problem areas. Among the ten grammatical categories analyzed, *subject-verb agreement*, *verb tense*, and *sentence structure* emerged as the most frequent sources of errors. These findings suggest that students experienced considerable difficulty maintaining grammatical consistency when constructing sentences.

Subject-verb agreement was the most frequent error category, particularly in descriptive and process paragraphs. This finding reflects a common difficulty among second-language learners, who often struggle to maintain agreement between singular and plural forms, especially in more complex sentence structures (Celce-Murcia 2001). The high frequency of these errors suggests that students may lack automatic control over agreement rules when composing extended written texts.

Similarly, *verb tense errors* were observed across all paragraph types. Inconsistent use of tense can disrupt the logical sequence of ideas and reduce the clarity of the text. Such errors may occur when students shift between present and past forms without clear contextual justification. Previous studies have also identified tense consistency as a persistent challenge in EFL writing (Swan, 2005), particularly when students attempt to describe processes or explain causes and reasons.

Another major difficulty involved *sentence structure*, particularly in reason paragraphs, where 80% of the paragraphs contained structural problems. Reason paragraphs typically require students to organize arguments logically and present supporting explanations. As a result, these paragraphs often involve more complex sentence constructions, which may increase the likelihood of structural errors. The findings suggest that students may struggle to organize ideas coherently when dealing with more cognitively demanding writing tasks.

In addition to these major categories, several other grammatical issues were observed. *Modifiers*, *parallelism*, and *clarity and conciseness* occurred with moderate frequency across the paragraph types. Errors related to modifiers often involved misplaced or excessive descriptive elements, which sometimes created ambiguity in meaning. Similarly, problems with parallelism indicated difficulties in maintaining consistent grammatical patterns in lists or comparisons.

Furthermore, *transition words* were problematic, particularly in process and reason paragraphs. Because these paragraph types require clear logical connections between steps or arguments, the misuse or absence of transition words can disrupt the overall coherence of the text. This finding suggests that students may need more explicit instruction on how to use transitions effectively to guide readers through their ideas.

Another issue identified in the analysis was *limited sentence variety*, especially in descriptive paragraphs. The frequent use of simple sentences resulted in repetitive patterns that may reduce the overall fluency and sophistication of the text. Although simple sentences contribute to clarity, effective academic writing typically involves a combination of simple, compound, and complex structures to maintain reader engagement and express relationships between ideas (Weaver, 2005).

Finally, punctuation and pronoun usage errors occurred less frequently compared to other grammatical categories. However, these errors still affected the clarity of the writing, particularly when pronoun references were ambiguous or punctuation marks were omitted in longer sentences.

### Implications for Writing Instruction

The findings of this study highlight several important implications for writing instruction in EFL contexts. First, the strong reliance on simple sentence structures suggests that students may benefit from instructional activities that encourage the development of syntactic variety, particularly the use of

compound and complex sentences. Increasing students' confidence in using these structures may help them express ideas more effectively in different writing contexts.

Second, the high frequency of errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and sentence structure indicates that these areas should receive greater emphasis in writing instruction. Rather than focusing solely on isolated grammar exercises, teachers may consider integrating grammar instruction into writing practice, allowing students to apply grammatical rules in meaningful contexts.

Finally, the findings suggest that students may require additional support in organizing ideas and maintaining coherence across sentences and paragraphs. Explicit instruction on the use of transitions, logical connectors, and sentence patterns may help students produce more coherent and effective written texts.

In summary, this study demonstrates that while second-year students tend to rely heavily on simple sentence structures in paragraph writing, they also encounter several recurring grammatical difficulties. The most common errors involved subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and sentence structure, which affected the clarity and coherence of their writing across descriptive, process, and reason paragraphs. Addressing these issues through targeted instructional strategies may help students develop greater grammatical accuracy and syntactic variety, ultimately improving the overall quality of their academic writing.

## Conclusions

This study examined sentence types and grammatical errors in paragraph writing among second-year students at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University. The findings revealed that simple sentences were the most frequently used across descriptive, process, and reason paragraphs, indicating a strong preference for structurally simple forms in students' writing. While this preference may contribute to clarity, it also reflects limited use of more complex sentence structures that are often necessary for expressing detailed ideas and logical relationships in academic writing.

The analysis also identified several recurring grammatical difficulties. Subject-verb agreement, verb tense, and sentence structure were the most frequent error categories across all paragraph types. These problems suggest that students experience challenges in maintaining grammatical consistency when constructing sentences, particularly in writing tasks that require more complex reasoning or explanation.

In addition, other issues such as modifiers, parallelism, transition words, punctuation, and limited sentence variety were observed, although these occurred with relatively lower frequency. Despite being less common, these errors still affected the clarity and coherence of students' writing.

Overall, the findings highlight the need for instructional approaches that integrate grammar instruction with writing practice. Emphasizing sentence variety, grammatical accuracy, and coherence may help students develop stronger academic writing skills. Future research may further investigate how instructional strategies can support the development of syntactic complexity and grammatical accuracy in EFL writing contexts.

## Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the research findings, future studies should prioritize developing pedagogical strategies that address syntactic complexity, particularly through scaffolded writing and sentence-combining interventions. Investigating the efficacy of contextualized grammar workshops and comparing direct versus indirect feedback methodologies could provide deeper insights into long-term grammatical retention. Furthermore, the integration of educational technology and AI-based writing assistants warrants exploration to determine their impact on linguistic development versus student dependency.

To broaden the scope of EFL writing research, comparative analyses across different academic disciplines and investigations into L1 interference are recommended to better understand persistent error patterns. Additionally, exploring collaborative, peer-mediated learning environments and conducting longitudinal studies across varying proficiency levels will help track the evolution of writing skills over time. Ultimately, these research avenues will inform evidence-based instructional methodologies, leading to a more sophisticated and effective approach to teaching English writing.

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