

Unit 2: Solar Technology

Grammar comprehension:

Sentence Types

The two fundamental parts of any English sentence are the subject and the predicate (a verb). Sentences are composed of these and form a clause, which must contain a noun and verb. A subject plus verb may form an independent clause, also called a simple sentence and then other sentence types can be formed by adding additional clauses. This document only describes a simple sentence and some basic errors to ensure sentences are correct.

Simple Sentence

A simple sentence can also be described as a group of words expressing a complete thought. Subjects can be described as the component (person or thing) that performs the action described by the predicate, the main verb. Simple sentences are typically the most frequently used sentence type in spoken English and perform important roles in written English. Such a sentence can introduce ideas, state facts, or give a brief summary. While they are easy to understand it is important that the writer not use too many simple sentences, otherwise the written style may seem too informal or unsophisticated.

Examples of simple sentence

The shortest independent clause will typically be three words. It requires at least a noun and verb with either an object or an adjective. For example:

Hydropower is sustainable.

The adjective "sustainable" refers to hydropower and thus, modifies the subject. In a simple sentence with the verb "be", the final word is sometimes an adjective which modifies the subject. Other simple sentences will have the subject - verb - object structure; such as:

Solar power produces no emissions.

These are very easy sentences to understand as there is only one main thought. The reader will have little difficulty in understanding the communication, and thus such simple sentences are often the opening sentence of a paragraph.

Incomplete simple sentences

Writers can incorrectly build sentences, which appear to be independent clauses, but are not a complete thought. Such clauses could be missing a subject, or an object. The most frequent type of incomplete sentence is an imperative clause. This is often used in spoken English for commands, or simple instructions, but are not independent. They require another clause to be complete, for example:

Recharge the batteries.

In this clause the subject is missing. Such sentences should only be used in informal spoken English.

Other sentences may appear to be complete, but have a gerund which is not a subject, such as:

Trying to transmit power over long distances requires high-voltage lines.

The gerund trying is not a subject, somebody or thing needs to do this action (trying). While there may be many other types of incomplete sentences, the imperative or an incorrect use of a gerund are the most common.

If a series of words are missing both a noun and a verb they do not form any clause, but are called a phrase. These are less frequent errors as it should be clear to the writer that words are missing. An example is:

exceptionally fast power transmission