

EFL Students' Sentence Writing Accuracy: Can "Text Analysis" Develop It?

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Abstract

Sentence writing is inevitably needed in order to be able to write a longer text because the mastery of writing various types of sentences will facilitate writers to produce a good writing style. However, writing accurate sentences constitute problems for many EFL learners. One way to solve the problems is finding out a teaching strategy that can help the students to learn sentence writing more effectively. This study is an attempt to develop a strategy to teach sentence writing, aiming at knowing the effectiveness of text analysis to enhance the students' competence to write accurate sentences. An experiment was done in a classroom context by comparing the sentence writing accuracy of the students taught with a teaching strategy covering text analysis (experimental group) and that of the students taught with a teaching strategy without text analysis (control group). The study revealed that there is significant difference between the sentence writing accuracy of the students in the experimental group and that of the students in the control group. The students of the experimental group outperformed those of the control group. It means that text analysis is effective to develop EFL students' sentence writing accuracy. This is because text analysis is one way to learn grammar; it also strengthens the concept the students have learned. Based on this conclusion, it is suggested that a writing teacher ask the students to do text analysis in teaching sentence writing.

Keywords: accuracy, EFL students, sentence writing, teaching strategy, text analysis

1. Introduction

The idea that being able to write well is a talent that one either has or doesn't have is actually untrue. We can write coherently if we are willing to learn some strategies and practice them. Good writing requires the ability to write good sentences and to organize them logically into paragraphs and essays (Rustipa, 2013a). Thus, the mastery of sentence writing is a stepping stone to achieve the competence of composing a longer text which will lead to the students' literacy. The importance of English writing is also emphasized by Huan (2011) stating that English writing competence is crucial since English has become the language of global communication. So, improving students' writing accuracy and proficiency has become an important thing in English teaching recently. However, effective sentence writing is very challenging to teach. Therefore, teachers continue struggling to find effective ways to teach sentence writing.

The poor results of sentence writing teaching were revealed in researches. Based on error analysis on her second-semester students' sentences and based on the interview, the writer found out that more than 40% of her students couldn't identify the main verb of a sentence or a clause. This finding of course shocked the writer as an English teacher. This reflected the poor writing skills of the students as stated by Robinson & Howell (2008) that students with poor writing skills often write sentences that lack syntactic maturity. More surprisingly, based on the writer's and her colleagues' observation and evaluation, syntactic problems in writing sentences were also found in upper level undergraduate students' research papers, and even found in her graduate students' essays. These findings urged the writer to do a research to find a strategy to teach sentence writing.

The writer believes that the problems above are caused by the poor mastery of grammar and sentence structure. Thus, one way to solve the problem is more likely by strengthening their concept of language rules. Sheen (2007) explains that engaging language analysis promotes noticing and understanding because they process the language more deeply. Lee (2002, as cited in Rustipa, 2013b) says that text analysis refers to awareness-raising tasks that will deepen the students' understanding because they apply the concept they have learnt. These matters motivate the writer to investigate text analysis to develop EFL students' sentence writing accuracy.

This research aims at exploring the effectiveness of text analysis to enhance the students' mastery of English sentence writing. It is significant to develop a strategy to teach sentence writing to EFL students because sentence writing mastery will lead the students to produce syntactically-complex texts as stated by Alamargot & Chanquoy (2001, as cited in Silva et al., 2010) that syntactic maturity is a capacity that enables a writer to produce a syntactically-complex text or a good writing style.

Previous studies on sentence writing have been done by some language scholars. Andrews et al. (2004) did a research on the effect of grammar teaching (sentence combining) in English on 5 to 16 year olds' accuracy and quality in written composition. The research found out that the teaching of formal grammar (and its derivatives) was ineffective, and the teaching of sentence combining was one (of probably a number of) method(s) that was effective.

Huan (2011) investigated errors in college English writing in China. This study revealed that majority of errors in the students' writing resulted from poor grammar knowledge. So, college teachers should not overlook grammar teaching while they are teaching writing.

Khansir (2013) exploring errors made by Iranian and Indian undergraduate students found out that the maximum errors committed by the research participants were punctuation. And the minimum errors made by the students were spelling.

Ratnah (2013) investigated tense usage made by Indonesian students of Tour and Travel department. The research results indicated that the errors mostly made by the students were errors in using verb, time signals and the use of auxiliary verb. And the sources of errors were interlingual and intralingual

Those studies mentioned above are relevant to this current study in the following way. The first study explored the strategy of teaching sentence writing by teaching grammar indirectly (by sentence combining). This strategy was also applied in this current study. The other three studies investigated EFL students' writing outside and inside Indonesia. They all attempted to find out the roots of the students' problems in writing. This current study is also another attempt to find out the roots of the students' problems in sentence writing. Thus, the similarities between the previous studies and this current study are that they all investigated the writing strategies and tried to find the roots of the students' problems in writing. The differences are in the research environment and in the text analysis applied in this current study.

The problem to be solved in this research is "To what extent can text analysis enhance the EFL students' sentence writing accuracy?" Based on this research question, the null hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows: "there is no significant difference between the sentence writing accuracy of the students taught with teaching writing strategy covering text analysis and that of the students taught with teaching writing strategy without text analysis."

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teaching Sentence Writing

Sentence structure is one of the elements contributing to the quality of a piece of writing. Thus, sentence writing should be emphasized for students at the elementary level. Based on the researches, language scholars proposed suggestion concerning the writing instruction. Chin (2011) recommends that writing teachers use strategies of sentence combining, sentence expansion and sentence imitation to teach sentence fluency and grammar. In sentence combining, the student writers focus on flow of ideas. They learn that their language choices affect the message. The effectiveness of sentence combining strategy is supported by Andrew et al. (2004) research results revealing that the teaching of sentence combining is one method that is effective. It is believed that practicing to combine simple sentences into a compound or complex sentence has a positive impact on overall writing quality (Graham & Perin, 2007a; Graham & Perin, 2007b; Graham & Hebert, 2010 as cited in TEAL, 2010). Asking the students to combine sentences means teaching the rules of sentence structure by doing exercises. The writing teachers should remind the student writers of many correct ways to combine sentences.

Sentence expansion is a strategy in which student writers are asked to lengthen a short sentence by adding information to the beginning, middle, and/ or end of the sentence. The student writers can expand the sentence with words, phrases, and clauses. While doing this, they learn grammar and make their writing more detailed and more interesting to the readers (Chin, 2011).

Sentence imitation refers to presenting the model sentence. Chin (2011) explains that in sentence imitation strategy, the student writers are invited to copy or imitate the structure of a model sentence, but to replace the original words and ideas with the new words and ideas. Myles confirms that if the students are not exposed to written model, their errors in writing are more likely to exist (Myles, 2002 as cited in Rustipa, 2013a). Study of

written models with direct, guided practice was found to be an effective instructional strategy, especially for students with low skills. Thus, imitation and a model are important in teaching writing.

The other important thing needed by the student writers is to have constructive response to their writing, coming from classmates or teacher. This response can occur throughout a writing cycle; thus, the teachers respond after the writing task is done. This response is to encourage the students as writers. It describes what the teachers see in the students' work, which can be in the form of asking questions about content and form, giving suggestions or options, explaining strategies or techniques, etc. Using various responses can be effective and interesting, e.g., teacher response, peer response, whole-class response, self-response.

2.2 Text Analysis

Text analysis refers to awareness-raising tasks (Lee, 2002 as cited in Rustipa, 2013a). It is a crucial stage in teaching writing in order that the students apply the concept they have learned. Text analysis requires the students read and rewrite. They can analyze a text in groups, in pairs, individually. Sheen (2007) explains that engaging language analysis promotes noticing and understanding because they process the language more deeply. Ferris (2006) states that analyzing and editing their own work engage learners in reflective learning processes. Rustipa (2015), based on the interview with several students, revealed that analyzing and editing a text was demanding and sometimes frustrating. However, this challenged and encouraged or motivated them to solve the problem. When asked the benefits they got, they answered that they got deeper understanding of the English language knowledge. This is also in line with Literacy-Based Approach to teaching writing that emphasizes the dependency of writing on reading. Student writers should analyze a text, read and reread in order that they can be critics of their own writing, instead of relying too much on the teacher's feedback.

Text analysis covers the elements of a text which is so broad. To maximize the benefit of the analysis, the students need to focus on certain elements that they learn. Thus, when teaching sentence writing, a teacher should ask the students to analyze the text at the sentence level. Capability in individual sentence analysis is important because analyzing a text relies on our ability to identify all the different levels of writing: individual sentences, paragraphs, groups of paragraphs, sections, chapters, etc.

3. Method

This study investigated a teacher's sentence writing teaching strategy. It compared the sentence writing mastery of the students taught with teaching writing strategy covering text analysis and that of the students taught with teaching writing strategy without text analysis. The study was conducted in a classroom context when the researcher was teaching sentence writing to second semester students of Stikubank University (UNISBANK) Semarang, Indonesia.

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study were 40 students taken randomly from two groups of second semester English students of UNISBANK, academic year 2014/ 2015 taking Sentence-based Writing subject (note: group 1 consisted of 25 students; group 2 consisted of 25 students). In this research, the writer employed simple random sampling technique. The students' names of each group were given numbers 1, 2, 3, ...etc. in small pieces of paper. Then, 20 numbers of each group were taken, by closing the researcher's eyes. In this way, the students had equal chance to be the participants of the study. So, twenty students were taken from each group, and then they were divided into experimental group (20 students) and control group (20 students). The experimental group was taught with teaching strategy covering text analysis, and those of control group were taught with teaching strategy without text analysis.

The students were of 19-20 years old. From the 40 research participants, only 10 of them were male. They have started learning English since they were 13-14 years old when they were at the first year of Junior High School. Although they have learned English for 6-7 years, their proficiency level in writing English sentence is still low. It is proved by the pretest results held by the writer before the lesson began, i.e., their average score is 45.4. This low proficiency level is possibly caused by the Junior and Senior High School curriculum in Indonesia which emphasize the oral communication. So teaching writing is often ignored by the English teachers.

3.2 Procedure of Data Collection and Data Analysis

3.2.1 Pretest

All participants were asked to write 12 sentences with their own topics for 45 minutes. This is because the familiarity with the topics will facilitate the writing process, while the unfamiliarity with the topics will become a barrier in the writing process. The time allotment (45 minutes) provided for the students to do the pretest was

matched with the teaching time allotment because the study was done in a classroom context. The teaching time allotment was 50 minutes, five minutes for seating the students and for giving instructions while 45 minutes were used for writing 12 sentences. It was predicted that one sentence would be written in 3.5 minutes. During writing, they were not allowed to access the internet, to consult a dictionary in order that the results reflected their writing competence. This pretest was aimed at knowing the students' sentence writing skills before getting treatment.

3.2.2 Treatment

The experimental and control groups got different treatments. The students of the control group were taught with the following procedure: Introductory activities, Modeling, Explicit teaching, Practice (Sentence imitation, Sentence expansion, Sentence combining), Formative test consisting of Formative test 1 (the students worked independently to write 12 sentences), Teacher's written feedback, Students' revision based on teacher's feedback, Teacher's clarification of the students' problems, Formative test 2 (the students worked independently to write 12 sentences), Teacher's written feedback, Students' revision based on teacher's feedback, Teacher's clarification of the students' problems, Formative test 3 (the students worked independently to write 12 sentences), Teacher's written feedback, Students' revision based on teacher's feedback.

The students of the experimental group were taught with the following procedure: Introductory activities, Modeling, Explicit teaching, Practice (Sentence imitation, Sentence expansion, Sentence combining), Formative test consisting of Formative test 1 (the students worked independently to write 12 sentences), Teacher's written feedback, Students' revision based on teacher's feedback, Teacher's clarification of the students' problems, Formative test 2 (the students analyzed a three-paragraph text), Teacher's written feedback (comments on the correctness of the students' text analysis), Students' revision based on teacher's feedback (the students reanalyzed the text based on the teacher's comments), Teacher's clarification of the students' problems, Formative test 3 (the students analyzed a four-paragraph text which was different from the first text), Teacher's written feedback (comments on the correctness of the students' text analysis), Students' revision based on teacher's feedback.

3.2.3 Posttest

The students worked independently to write 12 sentences with their own topics (3 simple sentences, 3 compound sentences, 3 complex sentences, 3 compound complex sentences) for 45 minutes. Like in the pretest, the consideration is the students' familiarity with the topics and the teaching time allotment. Here, the students were required to write the four types of sentences that they have learnt in the treatment stage. The posttest administration was aimed at knowing the students' progress by comparing the pretest and posttest results.

3.2.4 Assessment

In assessing the students' work, the writer refers to Salsbury's rubric "a sentence has to be written exactly correct, including the punctuation and capitalization, unless it is counted as incorrect" (Salsbury, 2012). There were two raters involved in assessing the students' work, i.e., the writer and the writer's colleague who also taught Sentence-based Writing subject. The procedure of assessment is as follows: firstly the writer assessed the students' work, and then the writer consulted and had a discussion with her colleague concerning the scores, so each of the students' final score was based on the discussion of the two raters.

3.2.5 Comparing

The writer compared the sentence writing accuracy of the students taught with a teaching writing strategy covering text analysis and that of the students taught with a teaching writing strategy without text analysis. T-test was used to find out whether the difference of the means of the scores of the control and experimental groups was significant or not.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Findings: The More Effectiveness of Teaching Strategy Covering Text Analysis

The study found out that the experimental group students taught with teaching strategy covering text analysis made better progress than the control group students taught with teaching strategy without text analysis. The progress of the students can be seen from the different scores they obtained in the pretest and posttest.

The research results showed that at the beginning the control and experimental groups had similar competence in writing sentences. The pretest revealed that the average scores of the control group was 45.8 while the average scores of the experimental group was 45.

After getting the treatment, all students experienced improvement. The control group's mean score raised from

45.8 to 65.8 while the experimental group's mean score raised from 45 to 77.5. Thus, the experimental group outperformed the control group.

T-test calculation shows that the t -observed is 2.623, bigger than the t -value from the t -table: at the level of significance .05, i.e., 1.813. This means that the null hypothesis 'there is no significant difference between the sentence writing accuracy of the students taught with teaching writing strategy covering text analysis and that of the students taught with teaching writing strategy without text analysis' is rejected. This also means that there is a significant difference between the sentence writing accuracy of the students who did text analysis and those who did not do text analysis.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 The Teaching Strategy Covering Text Analysis to Develop EFL Students' Sentence Writing Accuracy

The findings revealed the inaccuracy or areas of errors committed by the students. The measurement of the sentence accuracy is based on the principle that "A sentence is said to be accurate when it is correctly composed." Therefore, in assessing accuracy, the writer refers to Salsbury's rubric "a sentence has to be written exactly correct, including the punctuation and capitalization, unless it is counted as incorrect" (Salsbury, 2012).

The research findings presented above point out the power of text analysis to reduce inaccuracy. The means score of the students doing text analysis raised from 45 to 77.5. It means that firstly the students committed 55% inaccuracy or errors. And after getting the treatment the inaccuracy reduced into 22.5%. This is different from the students who did not do text analysis whose means score raised from 45.8 to 65.8 meaning that firstly the students committed 44.2% inaccuracy, and after getting the treatment the inaccuracy reduced into 34.2%. So, it is apparent that text analysis is beneficial to reduce more inaccuracy, meaning that it can develop EFL students' sentence writing accuracy.

In order to show the features of the inaccuracy or errors committed by the students and to reveal the causes of the inaccuracy, the details of the errors will be illustrated and analyzed. Based on the data analysis, the errors mostly made by the students were conjugation. This finding is similar to Huan's research finding (2011) that Chinese college students mostly faced structural problem with *verb* as well as *tense*. Many students ignored the rules for conjugation. Here are some examples of conjugation errors taken from the research data.

- 1) Yumi listen music after watch clothes. (Data 1)
- 2) Andi did not like to read English, for he not very good at it. (Data 4)
- 3) He playing and dancing at the dance floor. (Data 6)
- 4) I catch the thief stealing the money in the bank yesterday. (Data 9)
- 5) The man is teach me English literature when I was in the college.(Data 10)
- 6) The students always come together. (Data 20)
- 7) Maudy, who love cat, will get a kitten. (Data 25)
- 8) Judy must prepares a party, but nobody help him to prepare the party. (Data 30)
- 9) The students happy with the decision of the dean. (Data 39)

In sentence 1, the student transfers the Indonesian rule (that doesn't have tenses) into English. He translates the Indonesian sentence literally into English without considering the English rule. This is called interlingual error in which mother tongue involvement results in the students' confusions and mistakes. In sentence 2, the student makes an error in the second clause "he not very good at it." Like in the first case, the student translates the Indonesian clause literally into English. He forgets the English rule that a clause must have a verb, and if there is no verb in the clause "be" or linking verb is added. Thus, the clause should follow this pattern "Subject + linking verb + complement (noun/ pronoun/ adjective/ adverb)." Similar research results were found by Ratnah (2013) that the sources of errors of tense usage made by Indonesian students of Tour and Travel department were interlingual and intralingual.

In sentence 3, it seems that the student is not aware that "playing" and "dancing" are not main verbs, that they are predicators. It is likely that he also forgets with the pattern of present continuous sentences, i.e., "Subject + to be + verb-ing". In sentence 4, the student makes error of tense because possibly he ignores the adverb of time "yesterday" at the end of the sentence. In sentence 5, i.e., in the first clause "The man is teach me English literature", the student doesn't only make error in tense but he also uses double main verbs, i.e., linking verb "is" and action verb "teach".

In sentence 6, the student fails to identify the plural noun of the subject “the students”; that is why, he uses “comes” instead of “come”. Similar to sentence 6, in sentence 7 the student fails to identify the singular form of the subject “Maudy” causing him to write a grammatical error in the clause “who love cat” instead of “who loves cat.”

In sentence 8, it seems that the student is not aware that modal is always followed by bare infinitive following this pattern “Subject + modal + infinitive without to”, so he should write “must prepare” instead of “must prepares.” In sentence 9, the student is not aware that “happy” is not main verb, that “happy” is an adjective as complement. Thus, he needs to add “be” as linking verb. So, the sentence should be “The students are happy with the decision of the dean.”

From the discussion above, it is clear that the students still have problems with the selection of verb tense and still have difficulties with subject-verb agreement. It should be borne in mind that verb tense errors can be serious; they often interfere with communication since subject and finite are mood of a discourse which bears meaning. And the root of the problem is that the students do not have sufficient knowledge of the English language rules; they do not have clear concept of grammar. The solution of the problem is by doing practice and by doing sentence and text analysis. This is a way to learn grammar by doing, to learn grammar indirectly, to learn grammar inductively. Andrews’ et al. study (2004) found out that the teaching grammar by doing was more effective. Language scholars propose that students practice imitating sentences, expanding sentences, combining sentences. Chin (2011) states that by these practices, the students learn fluency and accuracy simultaneously, they also learn about flow of ideas.

In this study, the writer asked the students to learn the grammar rules deductively and inductively. There was only a very little portion of deductive grammar teaching which was done in the Explicit Teaching stage in which the teacher explained technical terms using examples. After short explanation of technical terms such as *subject*, *predicate*, *object*, *verb*, *clause*, *phrase*, etc., then the teacher and the students analyzed the examples together. Thus, analysis practice has been done from the early stage.

Teaching grammar inductively by doing was done in Practice stage in which the teacher asked the students to apply the concepts they have learned in Practice stage to make their own writing. Previously they did sentence imitation, sentence expansion, and sentence combining which is in accordance with the ideas of Graham & Perin (2007a), Graham & Perin (2007b), Graham & Hebert (2010), Andrew et al. (2004), Chin (2011). Afterwards, the students analyzed their own sentences and did several revisions based on the teacher’s feedback. Huan (2011) argues that these practices can assist the students to be independent and confident learners. Ferris (2006) states that analyzing and editing their own work engage learners in reflective learning processes. After doing sentence analysis, they did two text analysis (a three and four paragraph text) in which they stated the subject and verb of each clause in the text; they were also asked to identify the conjugation errors in each sentence because not all sentences in the text were correctly made. This text analysis activity deepened their concept and understanding about conjugation. By this text analysis, the students deduced grammar rules during the analysis process. And this resulted in the reduction of the inaccuracy they previously did. Grammatically correct sentence structure should be mastered by a student because errors will hamper the reader’s or hearer’s comprehension. Thus, poor sentence structure and grammar can affect comprehension. It should be borne in mind that poor sentence structure and grammar also shows the carelessness and lack of professionalism of the writer.

The second biggest problem the students faced is in punctuation; many students are still confused with the use of a semicolon and a comma. Here are some examples of punctuation errors.

- 1) My mother likes watching Korean drama but I like Indonesian drama. (Data 2)
- 2) Ani goes to school by bus and she never comes late. (Data 7)
- 3) I will buy the red car; or I will lease the blue one. (Data 12)
- 4) Banana is healthy fruit, it has vitamin needed by human. (Data 15)
- 5) The tuition fee in UNISBANK is cheap, however, many students cannot afford it. (Data 21)
- 6) I chose to go by taxi, because it was too crowded in the bus. (Data 27)
- 7) Before he had a new car he always went to the office by public transportation. (Data 35)
- 8) After I joined the vocal course, I got many jobs; and I had many experiences. (Data 40)

Sentences 1-5 are compound sentences. Oshima & Hogue (2006, p. 164) explains that a compound sentence is two or more independent clauses joined together in three ways, i.e., with a coordinator, with a conjunctive adverb, with a semicolon. Sentences 1-3 are compound sentences joined with coordinator conjunctions *but*, *and*,

or. In joining two or more independent clauses with coordinator conjunctions, the rule of punctuation is as follows: there is a comma after the first independent clause. So, the first and second sentences lack of a comma, and the semicolon in the third sentence must be substituted with a comma. Thus, the correct punctuation is

- 1) My mother likes watching Korean drama, but I like Indonesian drama.
- 2) Ani goes to school by bus, and she never comes late.
- 3) I will buy the red car, or I will lease the blue one.

Sentence 4 is a compound sentence consisting of two independent clauses closely related in meaning. Thus, a semicolon should be used to connect the two independent clauses, not a comma. So the correct punctuation is "Banana is healthy fruit; it has vitamin needed by human." Sentence 5 is a compound sentence with a conjunctive adverb *however*. The rule for punctuating such a compound sentence is "put a semicolon before and a comma after the conjunctive adverb." Thus, the correct punctuation is "The tuition fee in UNISBANK is cheap; however, many students cannot afford it."

Sentences 6 and 7 are complex sentences. Oshima & Hogue (2006, p. 211) explain that in punctuating a complex sentence is as follows. When a dependent clause comes first in a sentence, put a comma after it. When a dependent clause follows an independent clause, do not separate the clauses with a comma. So the correct punctuation of sentences 6 and 7 is

- 6). I chose to go by taxi because it was too crowded in the bus.
- 7). Before he had a new car, he always went to the office by public transportation.

Sentence 8 is a compound complex sentence. The first clause is a dependent clause; the second clause is an independent clause. Thus, a comma is a correct transition signal. The third clause is an independent clause started with coordinating conjunction *and*. Thus, a comma should be used to connect the second and the third clauses. So the correct punctuation is "After I joined the vocal course, I got many jobs, and I had many experiences."

Like the cause of conjugation error, the root of punctuating problems is that the students do not have sufficient knowledge of punctuating rules; they do not have clear concept of punctuation. The solution of the problem is by doing practice and by doing sentence and text analysis as done in tackling conjugation errors. In this study, the writer made the students aware of the punctuation rules by analyzing the punctuation of their own writing, revising it if needed, and analyzing punctuation of a three and four paragraph text. This refers to Lee (2002, as cited in Rustipa, 2013a) that text analysis is an awareness-raising task.

The third kind of error made by the students is spelling errors. Only few students made spelling errors. It seems that spelling does not constitute a problem for most students. Here are some examples of spelling errors.

- 1) I really want to go, but I'm *to* sick to drive. (Data 8)
- 2) I like *coffe*, and he likes milk. (Data 13)
- 3) Tono and Tini played a game *together* yesterday. (Data 19)

Concerning capitalization, the writer did not find errors in it. All of the research participants can capitalize their sentences correctly.

From the discussion above, it is clear that the maximum errors committed by the research subjects were conjugation, while the minimum errors were capitalization. This finding is slightly different from Khansir's (2013) research finding on Indian and Iranian undergraduate students showing that the maximum errors committed by research subjects were punctuation while the minimum errors were spelling.

It seems that the sentence writing problems faced by EFL students are more or less the same. They are conjugation, punctuation, and spelling. Teaching and learning language rule by doing are proved to be more effective in developing EFL students' sentence writing accuracy. The practice of imitating, sentence expansion, sentence combining, text analysis facilitate the students to develop sentence writing competence.

4.2.2 The Students' Doing Text Analysis to Strengthen and Develop Concept of Language Rule

It has been mentioned previously that the students of the experimental group were asked to do text analysis in the second and third formative tests. The students analyzed the text individually, in pairs and/ or in group. In other words, during the analysis process, they can have consultation with their friends to help each others. This is suggested by Gavioli & Aston (2001, as cited in Cho, 2015) since this collaboration also encouraged spoken interaction by discussing and comparing analyses. Cho (2015) suggests the pedagogical implication of this

corpus-based instruction.

In analyzing the text, the teacher asked the students to identify: (1) the number of sentences in the text, (2) the type of each sentence, (3) the dependent/ independent clauses of each sentence, (4) the subject(s) and the main verb(s) of each clause, (5) the connector. The students were also asked to identify the errors in each sentence. This is important because not all sentences in the text were correctly made.

In analyzing the text, the students started with segmenting the text into sentences. Then, the sentences were segmented into clauses. Afterwards, the students decided whether the clause was dependent or independent and decided the subject and main verb of each clause. The connectors in the text were also identified in order that the students learnt the cohesive devices to build text coherence. In order to analyze critically, the students were also asked to identify the errors in the text, errors in conjugation, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, etc. It should be borne in mind that the students themselves chose the texts to be analyzed and the texts chosen were not always good texts. Many students analyzed texts that contained a lot of errors.

The underlying reasons in determining the elements to be analyzed are explained as follows. Analyzing sentences is a way to implant the concept of a sentence. The students should know that a sentence is a group of words used to communicate ideas, formed from one or more clauses expressing a complete thought (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p. 164). Every sentence must have a subject and a predicate; a subject is built around a noun or pronoun while a predicate is built around a verb. A subject is what the sentence is about and a predicate is what the subject does.

Analyzing types of sentences will enable the students to master the technical terms and the features of each type of sentences. This is important because the mastery of composing the basic kinds of sentences (simple, compound, complex, compound complex) can develop a good writing style. Writing that uses merely one type of sentence is boring and may not convey the message that a writer intends.

Analyzing a clause is beneficial to make the students aware of the meaning and the types of clauses. Analyzing the subject(s) and the main verb(s) of each clause is an attempt to make the students master English tenses, conjugation, subject-verb agreement. This is very important because the study concludes that conjugation is the greatest problem for Indonesian EFL learners.

Analyzing punctuation is also important because the study revealed that punctuation is the second greatest problem for Indonesian EFL learners. And analyzing the connectors will make the students learn the cohesive devices.

In the first text analysis, many students found difficulties in differentiating between the dependent and independent clauses. This resulted in the problems of identifying the type of each sentence in the text (simple, compound, complex, compound complex sentence). The other problem many students faced is in identifying the subject of a clause, especially when the subject and predicate of the clause were in the form of noun phrase and verb phrase. After the teacher's written feedback, the students' revision based on teacher's feedback, the teacher's clarification of the students' problems by reexplaining the sentence structure, the sentence types, the punctuation, and also by clarifying the technical terms, they were more competent in analyzing the second text. It is proved by the better result of the formative test.

After the formative tests, the writer gave an oral test to the students of the control and experimental groups concerning their knowledge of English sentences and also the technical terms such as *subject*, *verb*, *predicate*, *object*, *noun*, *infinitives*, *phrase*, *dependent/ independent clause*, *simple/compound/ complex sentences*. The result was that the students of the experimental group got deeper understanding of the English sentences. This supports Sheen's (2007) statements that text analysis refers to awareness-raising tasks which promote noticing and understanding because the students process the language more deeply.

That the students doing text analysis got better knowledge is understandable because in doing text analysis, they applied the concept they had learned to solve the problems. It is hypothesized that if a concept is used to solve problems, the concept will be strengthened. Doing text analysis is also another way to learn grammar by doing besides doing sentence combining and sentence expansion practice. It is supported by Andrews', et al. (2004) research results that the teaching of formal grammar (and its derivatives) is ineffective, and the teaching of grammar indirectly by doing is effective. Thus, text analysis forces the student writers to process the language more deeply with more mental effort that will result in the increase of their understanding of language accuracy.

The deeper understanding of English sentence in turns affects the students' capability in making accurate sentences. As a result, the posttest results showed that the average score of the students of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group. Thus, the students' doing text analysis can develop EFL students'

sentence writing accuracy.

The other factor that makes text analysis promote understanding resulting in the capability in producing more accurate sentences are that by doing text analysis the students read more. Huan (2011) explains that writing is more related to reading which is effective to strengthen writing skills. Thus, reading more will help to develop the students' writing competence. Similarly, Gee (2008) argues that good writers are also good readers. Moreillon (2007) also explains that reading and writing skills are two sides of literacy coin that cannot be separated, that influence each other.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

This study is an attempt to develop a strategy to teach sentence writing. The investigation of this study concludes that the strategy of sentence writing teaching that includes text analysis can develop EFL students' sentence writing accuracy more effectively. Thus, text analysis approach to teach sentence writing is an alternative strategy that is possibly applied by the teacher of English as a foreign language.

The steps of the teaching strategy employed in this study that is proved to be more effective are as follows: Introductory activities, Modeling, Explicit teaching, Practice (Sentence imitation, Sentence expansion, Sentence combining), Formative test (writing sentences, students' doing their sentences revision based on the teacher's feedback, students' doing text analysis).

In the introductory activities, the teacher stimulated the students' interest by doing brainstorming, attention grabbing. Graham & Perin (2007a) state that this activity may be particularly important for low-achieving learners for compensating and overcoming weak prior knowledge. After doing introductory activities, the teacher presented model sentences to be learned and analyzed by the students with the teacher's help. Explicit teaching was done by explaining unfamiliar terms using examples. The students and the teacher, then, analyzed the examples to find out the unfamiliar terms. In practice stage, the teacher asked the students to apply the concepts they have learned to make their own writing. Previously they did sentence imitation, sentence expansion, and sentence combining which is in accordance with the ideas of Graham & Perin (2007a), Graham & Perin (2007b), Graham & Hebert (2010), Andrew et al. (2004), Chin (2011). The following step is the students' writing sentences and doing several revisions based on the teacher's feedback. In revising, of course the students analyzed their own text before doing the revision. Huan (2011) argues that these practices can assist the students to be independent and confident learners. The last step is the students' doing text analysis. Sheen (2007) explains that engaging language analysis promotes noticing and understanding because they process the language more deeply. The deeper understanding of English sentence in turns affects the students' capability in making accurate sentences. The other factor that makes text analysis promote understanding resulting in the capability in producing more accurate sentences is that by doing text analysis the students read more. Moreillon (2007) also explains that reading and writing skills are two sides of literacy coin that cannot be separated, that influence each other. From the short illustration of the steps of teaching above, it is clear that the students were stimulated to do analysis in most of the steps. And the last step is doing text analysis.

The students analyzed the text individually, in pairs and/ or in group. In analyzing the text, the teacher asked the students to identify: (1) the number of sentences in the text, (2) the type of each sentence, (3) the dependent, independent clauses of each sentence, (4) the subject(s) and the main verb(s) of each clause, (5) the connector. The students were also asked to identify the errors in each sentence.

The result of the study revealed the effectiveness of text analysis. The findings that text analysis can facilitate the EFL students to develop their sentence writing accuracy hopefully can give contribution to the teaching of sentence writing in Indonesia and in other countries whose students have similar problems with Indonesian EFL learners. In short, the writer recommends that text analysis be included as one step of the teaching strategy or teaching procedure.

The inaccuracy or error analysis in this study revealed that the most errors committed by the students were errors in conjugation and punctuation. It means that the students have problems in the two areas. The implication is that teachers should allocate more time to teach the two areas.

This study has limitation, especially in the limited number of research participants. Thus, future studies are recommended to employ more participants in order to obtain more valid research results. The future researchers are also recommended to use different model of text analysis or to develop more aspects to be analyzed in order to enrich the kinds of text analysis.

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