

Error Analysis of Generating Compound Sentence on Indonesian EFL Students

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Submitted: December 25, 2023

Accepted: January 15, 2024

ABSTRACT

Compound sentence is one of sentence types that need to be paid attention to using appropriate conjunction in combining ideas. For some students, this type is not always easy to construct the combination in the structure and ideas. This study aims at analyzing the students' error in writing compound sentence. The research applied the descriptive qualitative research, by using the purposive sampling. The research engaged 60 students of Writing Class at English Education Program in University of Indraprasta PGRI. The data collection was taken from the students' writing of compound sentence task, and it analyzed and classified into some sentence error based on Hacker and Sommers (2011). The finding shows the most common error that students made in constructing compound sentence is run-on sentence with 63.3% from total errors. By knowing this finding, hopefully the lecturers encourage the students in generating good compound sentence, and recurrently denote some errors examples of compound sentence.

Keywords: compound sentence, sentence error, error analysis

INTRODUCTION

Writing is one of the four skills that have to be mastered. For most students, writing is the most difficult task because it involves various components, and they have to express their idea in the correct form of writing. In writing, students learn how to write words, phrases, and clauses. They also learn how to construct the good sentences. When the students make a sentence, they should pay attention to some aspects in writing such as grammar, language style, writing mechanics, and the organization of writing. Since writing is a subject that has been taught in English Education Program of Indonesian universities, teaching writing becomes a challenging activity. It's indeed because the students must become proficient in generating all sentence types. Sentence is a set of words that has at least one subject, one predicate and implies a complete thought. It begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. According to (Hacker, Diana, 2011), structurally there are four types of sentences: simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence and compound-complex sentence in academic writing.

In fact, there are many students face some difficulties in writing. Most of them often make some errors in generating sentences, especially compound sentence. The compound sentence is one of the types that usually used by the writers. It consists of two independent clauses or simple sentences that connected by coordinating conjunction or conjunctive adverb. Some students choose inappropriate conjunction, or they do not follow the rules in generating such sentences.

Nevertheless, making errors is the most usual thing in the learning process, especially for the students who want to increase their ability in writing skills. Students should write some development texts and hand them in to the teacher in order to be corrected. During this process, teacher will return those texts to the students with feedbacks that could be in a form of cross-out in red throughout the paper or written comments in remarks. The teachers will spend more times correcting the students writing is not an effective result. Since the teachers correct all errors, they only know that their students are weak in writing, but they cannot locate the area of the weakness. As a result, students could not see their particular weakness in English writing, and the teachers could not provide a remedy for their students. To solve this problem, it is important to have an error analysis on students' writing. It focuses on the analysis of errors that students commit in the foreign language. (Khansir, 2012)

Considering that writing is an elaborating process especially writing in foreign language, many researchers have deliberated recognizing the common errors made by the students. (Heydari & Bagheri, 2012). As a result, there have been increasing issues of research in the Error Analysis field. Even though Slinker cited in (Zheng & Park, 2013) argued that the theory of Error analysis may already out-fangled, since it was initiated in 1960, the error analysis theory is up to the present time very helpful. Many teachers have used this to identify the students' writing errors, and to analyze the causes for those errors then put forward a plausible improvement.

Error Analysis gives some proofs on factual testified matter thus it can form the well planed fundamental in pedagogical approach construction (Khansir, 2012). It also provides a response whether the target language acquisition process are similar to the source language acquisition process. Presada and Bradea, 2014 cited in (Burhanuddin, 2020) explained that the number of errors of their students could decrease by doing error analysis. Based on the previous explanation, this study aimed to identify the most common sentence error in students' writing in generating compound sentence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Hacker, there are four types of sentence namely simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence and compound-complex sentence.. Simple sentence is an independent clause without subordinate clause. A simple sentence may contain compound elements: a compound subject, a compound verb, or a compound subject). It is referred as an independent clause because it contains a subject and a verb and forms a complete thought. It makes sense by itself, and can stand alone as a complete sentence.

Example:

The girls rowed past the dock.

This simple sentence only has a subject (The girls) and a verb (rowed)

Other example is:

The wind had fallen but was rising quickly by late afternoon.

This simple sentence contains one subject (The wind) and two verbs (had fallen and was rising). It is called a simple sentence with compound verb.

The next type is compound sentence. A compound sentence is composed of two or more independent clauses without subordinate clauses. It consists of at least two

independent clauses joined by a comma and coordinating conjunction, or a semicolon, or a transitional expression with semicolon. Each part can stand alone as complete sentence. There are seven coordinating conjunctions in English: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. For example:

The two stopped to eat, for the work had made them hungry.

This compound sentence consists of two independent clauses and one coordinating conjunction 'for'.

Furthermore, (Hogue, 2008) explained for not to be confused with the simple sentence contains compound verb. Pay attention to the following example:

1. Last year we went camping but had a terrible time.
2. Last year we went camping, but everyone had a terrible time.

In the first example is simple sentence with compound verb, and it doesn't need a comma before conjunction 'but'. On the other hand, the second example is compound sentence which need a comma before conjunction 'but'.

In compound sentence, a comma must be put before the coordinating conjunction.

The third type is complex sentence. It is made up of one independent clause and at least one or more dependent clause(Hacker, Diana, 2011) . A dependent clause lacks one of the elements that would make it complete sentence, and it begins with subordinating conjunction. There are common subordinating conjunctions: after, although, as, because, until, when, whenever, while, etc. The dependent clause has three types namely noun clause, adverbial clause and adjective clause. A complex sentence is often more effective than a compound sentence because it indicates clearer and more specific relationship between the main parts of a sentence.

In example:

Jason watched an exercise program because he wanted to tone-up.

This sentence contains one independent clause (Jason watched an exercise program) and one dependent clause (because he wanted to tone-up) which is formed from adverbial clause with subordinate conjunction 'because'.

The last type is compound-complex sentence. As its name, a compound-complex sentence combines complex sentence and compound sentence forms. A compound complex sentence contains at least two independent clauses and one or more dependent clauses (Riggs, 2014)

Example:

After the storm passed, I went out, and I picked flowers.

The sentence above contains two independent clauses (I went out; I picked flowers) and one dependent clause (after the storm passed); furthermore it combines by coordinating conjunction 'and'.

In learning English as a foreign language, teachers and students meet several problems. As (Khansir & Shahhoseiny, 2013) revealed that English teachers face a large amount of Iranian EFL students who made some errors in the pre-university level. This situation has made the English teacher to conceive the problems in a scientifically way. (Brannan, 2009) declared that recent study consider the sentence error such as fragments, comma splices, and fused sentence must be avoided by the students in writing. This sentence error in students' writing may cause misinterpretation to the reader. As a study

was conducted by (Sermsook et al., 2017) focused on sentence errors construction of Thai EFL students can possibly cause miscommunication.

There are two common errors often occur when the students construct a sentence, namely sentence fragment and run on sentence. A sentence fragment is a group of word that pretends to be a sentence (Diana Hacker-Nancy Sommer, 2019). This is commonly referred to as an incomplete sentence. Sentence fragments are often broken from preceding or succeeding sentence. Construct the sentence by giving a subject and a verb, and make sense by itself will avoid the sentence fragments. There are four reasons that causing sentence fragments:

a. Missing Subject

A subject tells about whom the sentence was made. If there is no subject, we will get confuse about who or what is doing the action in a sentence.

For example:

Sit under the tree.

This sentence doesn't have a subject (Who sits under the tree?)

This fragment can be a complete sentence by adding the appropriate subjects, so the revision will be: *They sit under the tree.*

b. Missing Verb

A verb provides what information is carried by the subject. If the verb is missing, we will be wondering what the subject is doing.

Example:

The book chapter (What does the book chapter do?)

This fragment can be a complete sentence by adding the verb, and it can be changed into:

The book chapter gives the good illustration.

c. Missing of subject and verb

Some fragments lost of subject and verb. By this situation, we don't know who the subject is, and what is done by the subject.

Example:

In the afternoon

This fragment can be made as complete sentences by changing it into:

She has come to my house in the afternoon.

Add "She" as the subject and has come as the verb.

d. The dependent clause

A dependent clause is a group of words contain a subject and a verb, but it does not make sense by itself, and it depends on an independent clause to give it meaning.

Example:

When he was very young

It can be fixed by adding the independent clause or the main clause. We can add a sentence before or after the clause.

Revision:

When he was very young, his father died.

It is easy to identify the fragments when they emerge out of context (Hacker, Diana, 2011) Sentence fragments never have independent clauses, but dependent clauses or phrases.

The second error is run-on sentence. There are some types of run-on sentence:

a. Fused Sentence

It is called a fused sentence when two complete sentences run together without any of conjunctions or proper punctuation, such as a period or a semicolon.

Example:

I went to the market I bought some vegetables there.

To fix this run-on we can put a period or semicolon between the two complete sentences.

Revision: *I went to the market. I bought some vegetables there.*

Or

I went to the market; I bought some vegetables there.

b. Comma splice

It occurs when the two complete sentences are joined only by a comma.

Example:

The two stopped to eat, the work had made them hungry.

The solution of this run-on, we can put the coordinating conjunction between the two sentences.

Revision: *The two stopped to eat, for the work had made them hungry.*

c. Missing comma

It occurs when there is no comma that precedes the conjunction in compound sentence.

For example:

The two stopped to eat for the work had made them hungry.

Considering that this is a compound sentence, it is important to put a comma before coordinating conjunction 'for'.

The revision will be: *The two stopped to eat, for the work had made them hungry*

To catch the correct run-on sentence, follow these common guidelines: join the two clauses with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS); break the run-on sentence into two separate sentences, and join the clauses with a semicolon.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied qualitative descriptive design. According to Corder 1967, cited in (Zheng & Park, 2013), there are five steps in error analysis. The first is collecting the samples from language learners; the second is identifying the learner's error; the third is making the description of the learner's error, the fourth is explaining the learner's error and the last is evaluating the learner's error. The participants were 60 students in the basic writing class of English Education Program of Indraprasta University. The instrument was the writing assignment. They are assigned to generate some sentences with the compound structure based on the picture given. The methodology of this study encompassed data collection and data analysis. As the data collected, there were about 34 sentences that have errors out of 120 sentences written by the students.

These 34 sentences were analyzed by classifying them to different type of sentence error. The writer uses the sentence errors types based on (Hacker, Diana, 2011). They categorized the sentence error into two types; they are sentence fragment and run on sentence. After these sentences were classified based on their type of errors, the types of

errors were measured in percentage to know what kind of common error that students made. After that, the remedial suggestion was made to rectify the errors made by students.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research found some errors made by students regarding to missing subject, missing verb, and missing both subject and verb as the sentence fragment type of error; furthermore, sentence fused and comma splice as the run on sentence type of error.

Table 1. The Frequency and Percentage Types of Errors

No	Types of Error	Frequency	% of Total Errors
1	Sentence Fragment		
	a. Missing Subject	5	15.1
	b. Missing Verb	7	21.2
	c. Missing Subject and Verb	0	0
	Total error of sentence fragment	12	36.3
2	Run On Sentence		
	a. Fused Sentence	3	9.1
	b. Comma Splice	1	3.1
	c. Missing comma	17	51.5
	Total error of run on sentence	21	63.3

The table 1. shows the highest percentage of errors is run- on sentence with 63.3% from total errors. And the most common error made by the students was in missing comma. To see the details of error in each sentence, the further analysis of the errors categorized them into five types namely missing subject, missing verb, missing subject and verb, fused sentence, comma splice, and missing comma.

a. Missing Subject.

The research found about 15.1% from total or 5 errors of missing subject in constructing compound sentence on students' writing. In a sentence, a subject is indicated by the absence of an item that must be come up in it.

For example, the sentence *"He talk to them, and discusses an important matter"*. This sentence is not considered as a compound sentence, since it does not have at least two independent clauses. It is also not grammatically correct because the verb "talk" needs a suffix -s as the agreement with the subject "he". To generate a compound sentence, it needs one more independent clause after the coordinating conjunction "and". So, the revision is *"He talks to them, and they discuss an important matter"*.

The next is the sentence *"Doing education in first floor"*. This is not a sentence at all since it does not express a complete thought. It needs two independent clauses to generate a compound sentence, so to fix this error it needs a subject to make it sense, and also it needs one more independent clause. The revision is *"They were doing learning process on the first floor, and the flood was coming through."*

Other example is the sentence of *"Alice and Aila riding motorcycle and wearing helmet."* This sentence is not regarded as a compound sentence since there is only one independent sentence. To construct a compound sentence it needs one more independent clause. This

sentence lacks a “to be” to construct the verb grammatically correct. The reconstruction is “*Alice and Aila **are** riding motorcycle, and **they are** wearing helmet*”.

The errors of missing subject occurred because the students often generated the simple sentence with compound verb. Their understanding in compound sentence is inadequate.

This missing subject error also has occurred in Thai EFL students, but it occurred because of different reason. This finding is based on the research that was conducted by (Sermsook et al., 2017). The research result is some omitting subject occurs because in Thai, the subject of the second can be omitted, but in English it brings the errors since it can cause a misleading to assert the complete meaning of a sentence.

b. Missing Verb.

A sentence must consist of a verb that follows a subject. If there is no verb, it is not considered as a sentence. Based on the data, there are 7 errors or 21.2% from all errors that were made by the students. First example of error as in sentence “*The trash blockaded the irrigation gludder, so it causing the flood at school*”. Pay attention to the word “gludder”. This word doesn’t match to any meaning, so it has to be changed into gutter to have a clear meaning. In addition, the clause “it causing the flood at school” needs a ‘to be’ (was) in order to be grammatically correct. The revision is “*The trash blockaded the irrigation **gutter**, so it **was** causing the flood at school*”.

Another example is a sentence of “*Anna always speak English every day, yet she not confidence to practek*”. The verb ‘speak’ needs a suffix-s to fulfill the subject-verb agreement. The clause yet she not confidence to practek needs ‘to be’ (is) after the subject, and the words ‘confidence’ and ‘practek’ are changed into confident and practice. As a result, the revision is “*Anna always **speaks** English every day, yet she **is** not **confident** to **practice it***”.

The third example is “*He stand in front of class for he not work his homework*”. In the first independent clause, the subject is ‘he’, so the verb stand must be added by suffix-s. It is also need a comma before the conjunction ‘for’. On the second independent clause, the word ‘work’ is incorrectly in use. This clause should be changed into *he did not do the homework*. Accordingly, the reconstruction is “*He **stands** in front of **the** class, for he **did** not **do** his homework.*”

Most of errors that students made in missing verb are caused by the disagreement between the subject and verb. They often missed to put the suffix-s on the verbs. This error of omitting “to be” is quite happened because the Indonesian language does not have any element that has the similar function as be in English (Subekti, 2018). This error of verb also occurs in Chinese EFL students; (LI, 2021) said that the error of “serial verb construction” has occurred because this is widely used in Chinese.

c. Fused Sentence

A fused sentence occurs when two independent clauses are joined without punctuation or without a coordinating conjunction. If we refer to the data, there are some fused sentences occurred. It is about 9.1 % or 3 sentences that have been identified as fused sentence. The example of fused sentence error that made by the students is in the

sentence “*They are speaking they are walking on the flood*”. This sentence needs a comma and a coordinating conjunction, so the meaning will be clear. The reconstruction is “*They are speaking, and they are walking on the flood*”.

According to (Charpentier-Jiménez, 2020), from about 63 sentences or 14.54 % of errors types (fragment, fused sentence, and comma splice), there is about 6,69% or around 29 sentences that categorized in fused sentence.

d. Comma Splice

Based on the data, there is one error in comma splice. This sentence is “*I am learning Japanese language, my sister learning English language*. There are two independent clauses, and they must be joined by a coordinating conjunction after the punctuation. The revision is “*I am learning Japanese, but my sister is learning English*”. It usually happens when the students often forget to put the correct conjunction.

This similar errors are in line with the result revealed by (Telaumbanua et al., 2020) who said that Indonesian ED students just put a comma to join two independent clauses without the clear reason. In addition, they flunked in using conjunction to join the two independent clauses together. (Jabeen et al., 2015) argued that errors are not always a poor thing, but they are important things in the language learning process. Errors also give contribution to comprehend the foreign language better. Predicting or analyzing the students’ error in language learning process can supply the meaningful information for teachers, researchers and students to know the problems those students may get (Mourssi, 2013).

e. Missing comma

In compound sentence rule, a comma must be put before the coordinator conjunction such as and, but, or, for, so, nor, and yet. The example of this error is “*The fireman were helped some teacher moreover another were helped school gardener*”. This sentence used “moreover” as the conjunction, and there is a run-on sentence since the usage of moreover must be preceded and followed by punctuation. In addition, student made a grammatical error in the words “*were helped*” which should be “*helped*” or “*were helping*”. The word “teacher” should be added by suffix-s since it was preceded by the word “some” which indicates “plural”. Based on the explanation, the correction is “*The fireman helped some teachers, moreover; another helped a school gardener*”.

The next example is “*Tiara already sit to wait for a half time so she feel boring*”, this sentence has error in missing comma before conjunction “but”. In addition, the phrase “*already sit to wait for a half time*” is incorrect because the action in the past still continues at the present. The revision should be “*Tiara has already sat to wait for a half time, so she is bored*”. Other example is “*I am standing in front of the class and there are so many teachers outside*”. This run-on sentence is missing a comma before the coordinating conjunction “and”.

Based on the data, this missing comma error became the most common error done by students. They often omit the punctuation namely comma and semicolon to generate the compound sentence. This error occurred because some of the students did not know the punctuation rules in compound sentence. According to (Charpentier-Jiménez, 2020),

from about 63 sentences or 14.54 % of errors types (fragment, fused sentence, and comma splice), there is about 6,69% or around 29 sentences that categorized in fused sentence.

CONCLUSION

Writing a good sentence is very important in order to express what the writer's thought. In achieving best outcome in writing, it needs more efforts and it must be started from the early learning. From the finding in constructing compound sentence, there are some errors that students made namely: missing subject (15.1%), missing verb (21.2%), comma splices (3.1%), fused sentence (9.1%), and missing comma (51.5%) The later is the most common error that students made. It is classified in run on sentence which occurred because students did not pay fully attention about the punctuation usage, especially a comma when they joined two independent clauses.

The research finding has proved that lecturer should encourage the students in preparing the massive foundation before they write the compound sentences. The error will occur in different types according the student's writing skills. Having better understanding in sentence types, student will be helpful to write better in conveying their thought in sentences and increasing them into paragraphs or even into passages by using the correct punctuation (Demirezen, 2019). The lecturer must do the evaluation to their students' writing in every learning process. The faster we diagnose their sentence errors; the faster we can fix them.

As (Phetongkam, 2013) said that error analysis can help teacher to determine the appropriate strategies for the students in learning language. It also can identify what lead the student from making the certain errors. In addition, (Kotsyuk, 2015) stated that teachers should have a mindful in figuring out what are the difficult things that students face in learning the foreign language, so the teacher can encourage students how to overcome it. By knowing this finding, hopefully the lecturers can more stimulate the students in generating good compound sentence, and recurrently denote some errors examples of compound sentence.

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