

A Comparative Study of Sentence Building in Writing Ability Among Students in Indonesia

Sari Famularsih¹, Muhammad Irfan Helmy^{2*}

Institut Agama Islam Negeri (IAIN) Salatiga, Indonesia^{1,2}

Email: sarifamularsih@yahoo.com¹

Email: mihelmy@iainsalatiga.ac.id^{2*}

Abstract: This research focuses on a comparative study of sentence building between the better students (more knowledgeable) and the novice students (less knowledgeable) in writing 1 class. It belongs to qualitative research involving two respondents of the better and the novice students. Three questions emerge in this research related to the dominant sentence types between the better and the novice students, the challenges and strategies in writing. Those questions are (1) What types of sentences dominate the sentences building of novice and better students? (2) What are the challenges in writing between novice and better students?, and (3) What are the students' strategies in writing?. In order to answer those three research questions, I run two methods of data collection. The first one is email observation, which tries to find an answer to the dominant sentence types of the better and the novice students. The second method is a face-to-face interview to get deeper insight and understanding of the challenges and strategies in writing. As a result, the better student surprisingly dominates her paragraph writing assignments with complex sentences that show her advanced writing skills as the effect of her writing practice. Meanwhile, the novice one mostly occupies simple sentences to avoid errors because she has an inadequate practice that exposes her fear. In terms of challenges, this study finds five items, including the complex process of writing, anxiety, and panic, time constraints, grammar, and vocabulary. In the case of writing strategies, the finding reveals four items, such as short writing, frequent writing, dictionary usage, and reading practice.

Keywords: *Challenges in Writing, Sentence-Building, Strategies in Writing.*

INTRODUCTION

Language skills cover two broad general aspects, including receptive and productive skills. The receptive one accommodates listening and reading skills in which learners passively decode learning materials. Whereas,

the productive skills ignite learners to encode language actively and creatively in the form of both written and spoken forms. In applying English sentence structure, students need to know the patterns that must be mastered. Moreover, in making sentences, students need to

focus on various cultures between one student and another.

In the case of developing writing skills, the process is complicated because it must get through a complex process, including planning, drafting, and revising (Flower, Linda & Hayes, 2004). On the top of that, it also involves many activities such as reading, talking, observing, acting, making, thinking, feeling, and decoding words on papers (Hyland, 2002). Those are the reason why writing skills becomes burdensome for learners, especially the ones who perceive English as a foreign language.

The difficulty in writing also applies to Indonesian students who have the same perception about English writing skill that essay needs more carefulness, especially in sentence building. From elementary to high school, they learn it in general English classes. Therefore, students do not focus on learning writing skills in specific courses, but they know writing as part of a package of language skills in general English classes. It is considered due to the different goals in language learning. In this case, the main goal is to understand the language and pass the examination.

The condition is contradictory when the students get into higher education majoring in English. They start to learn writing skills in a particular class. In this circumstance, there is a gap between English writing skills from the previous education level with the competency expected in the current writing class. The class becomes challenging due to those skill gaps. Eventually, the students are getting challenging to compose good sentences.

Based on the previous background, this research tends to answer the following questions:

1. What types of sentence dominate the sentences building of novice and better students?
2. What are the challenges in writing between novice and better students?
3. What are the students' strategies in writing?

In order to give theoretical arguments, I present the literature review of the related topic on writing, including types of sentences, the nature of writing, the challenges in writing, and the strategies in writing. The literature reviews are presented as follow.

A sentence is as a set of words that has a subject, a verb, and a complete thought within (Oshima, A and Hogue, 1996). If those components are not fulfilled in a certain set of word, it will be entitled as fragment (Hartoyo, 2007). The following samples differentiate between those two entities:

Sentence	: <i>I write a novel</i>	
Fragment:	: <i>I a novel</i>	(There is no verb)
	<i>I write.</i>	(It is not a complete thought because the transitive verb 'write' requires an object)
	<i>Write a novel.</i>	(There is no subject)

Generally, a sentence appears in three different types simple, compound, or complex sentences. In the case of simple sentences, it is normally short, including single subject and verb (Pardiyono, 2010). Moreover, (Ginting, 2018; Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005) states that simple sentence is a single-clause sentence containing a subject and verb expressing a single idea. In line with that, (Oshima, A and Hogue, 1996) explicate that a simple sentence contains a combination of a single subject and verb. In details, they break down the combination into four simple sentence formulas as follow:

1. SV (simple subject with simple verb)
My younger sister
speaks English well.

2. SSV (compound subject with simple verb)
My mother and father speak English well.
3. SVV (simple subject with compound verb)
My older brother is a lawyer and **has** a good job.
4. SSVV (compound subject with compound verb)
My mother and father speak and **write** English well.

In brief, a simple sentence accommodates a clause containing a single subject-verb combination and has a single idea to complete the meaning conveyed in the sentence.

Different from simple sentences, compound ones cover more than one clause. It is made up of more than one independent clause, which can stand alone as a sentence (Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005). Similarly, (Pardiyono, 2010) says that this type of sentences is relatively long sentences that can use up more than one lines and have more than one subject-verb combination. Although the sentences are longer than simple ones, they are actually more effective and efficient in explaining the information.

In order to compose a compound sentence, the sentences are connected by a comma and coordinating conjunction such as and, but, or, so, for, nor, yet (Oshima, A and Hogue, 1996; 2006, P44; Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005; Pardiyono, 2010). Oshima exemplifies this type of sentences as follow:

1. My family goes camping every summer, **and** we usually have fun.
2. Last year we went camping at Blue Lake, **but** we had a terrible time.

3. Next year we will take a cruise, **or** we may just stay at home.
4. We want to go to Hawaii soon, **so** we need to save money

Next to compound sentences, the type of complex sentences is similar to compound sentences in terms of longer sentences and a combination of more than one clause. However, the clauses are not all in the format of independent sentences as in that of compound sentences. In this light, one clause serves as the main clause, and the rest is as a sub-clause, which cannot stand alone as a sentence (Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005; Pardiyono, 2010). It's different from compound sentence conjunctions, the clauses of complex sentences are connected by a subordinating conjunction such as although, because, if, before, when, where, who, that, which etc.(Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005; Pardiyono, 2010).

The following samples visualize the format of compound sentences. IS means 'Independent Sentence'. Then, C stands for 'Conjunction'. Whereas, DS is abbreviated from 'Dependent sentence.'

1. She keeps attending the class (**IS**) **although** (**C**) she is unwell (**DS**).
2. I go to school by bus (**IS**) **because** (**C**) I do not have a motorcycle (**DS**).
3. I will buy you a new handphone (**IS**) **if** (**C**) you get A in English subject (**DS**).
4. The boy, **who** (**C**) is working in the exam papers (**DS**), is my brother (**IS**).
5. I have bought a laptop (**IS**), **which** (**C**) is set up for gamers (**DS**).

To sum up, the shorter sentence from those three types is the simple sentence that contains a single subject-verb combination. Meanwhile, the other two types; compound and complex sentences, have longer sentence buildings and include more than one clause. However, compound and complex sentences differ in terms of conjunction and format. Compound

sentences employ independent clauses in the combination. Whereas, complex ones occupy only one independent clause as the main sentence and one or more dependent clauses as the sub-clause to modify and provide more information to the main clause. To make a complete sentence, students can use other parts of speech to build on this basic structure. A good writer will use a variety of sentence structures to make his or her work more interesting.

Developing writing skills involves a recursive process and a number of stages. According to (Perl, 1980), writing represents a process of discovering meaning through several repetitive stages. It means that a learner must realize that they have to get through a process in order to be a good writer. In addition, the process may repeat until they achieve the level of write better as the final stage of writing easier, writing more, and writing differently proposed by (Pennington, 1996).

In the stage of writing more comfortable, learners produce a scratch of poor writing and explore their ideas with no anxiety. They are free to express anything in their mind without any significant constrain. Accordingly, this stage yields a basic product of writing that later will be revised simultaneously. As the effect of the writing easier stage, learners came up with confidence to write more sentences in the second stage. As learners experience those two preliminary stages, they expose to get involved in more process and evolution in the third stage; writing differently. Lastly, the combination of those three stages will lead learners in writing better stages in which they can produce qualified and improved pieces of writings.

The term of exploration ideas in the notion of writing indicates that writing activities do not involve only a single cognitive process. The idea needs to be recorded, developed (Arnold et al., 2017) and also polished (Slaughnessy, 1977 cited in (Zamel, 1982) . In other words, it covers the process of reading,

talking, observing, acting, making, thinking, feeling, and decoding words on paper (Hyland, 2002).

Similarly, (Flower, Linda & Hayes, 2004) (1981 in Wray 2004) explain that the cognitive process of writing runs through the stages of planning, translating, and reviewing. At the planning stage, learners brainstorm their long-term memory to ignite initial ideas, find the topic, consider the audience, and plan the writing activity. After those complex processes in the planning stage, learners start to encode their idea into sentences in the translating stage. Next to the second stage, the reviewing stage applies, including activities of sub-processes, evaluating, and revising. In the reviewing stage, writers involve a conscious process of choosing reading resources on related topics in which they may have a repetitive process of planning and translating.

Likewise, (Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005) employ a series of steps, collectively known as the writing process. The process entails planning, pre-writing, drafting, revising for content, revising for structure, and revising for grammar and mechanics. In the planning stage, writers consider the task, its requirements, purpose, and audience. From the consideration, then they start to generate ideas. Meanwhile, in the pre-writing stage, writers proceed with the ideas into drafts and produce a weak, unfocused structure of essays. Although this stage poorly develops ideas, the pre-writing stage creates a visual image of the product before we begin it. Next to pre-writing stage, writers own very rough pieces of writing in the drafting stage. At this point, they have an opportunity to develop more ideas in the form of multiple drafts in order to compose the best work. Having finished the drafting stage, the revising for contents stage deploys involving the collaborative work with classmates, readers, or temporary audience to overview the contents. In-depth, the collaborative work begins to revise the structure whether the product achieves the goals intended,

clearly state the topics, and fully develop. Then, the revising stage also scrutinizes the area of grammar and mechanics in which usually includes the activity of editing and proofreading. In this circumstance, writers may find serious errors, fine-tuning the sentences, polish the writing products by choosing appropriate dictions.

According to Walden University (2020), sentence structure or sentence building refers to the physical nature of a sentence and how the elements of that sentence are presented. Such as word choice, writers should strive to vary their sentence structure to create rhythmic prose and keep their reader interested. Sentences that require a variation often repeat subjects, lengths, or types.

Based on the above explanation, it is clear-cut that a writing process employs several stages in which writers generate ideas, develop and revise the writing, change words, and sentences, or even delete the paragraph. Moreover, these are some challenges in writing, namely:

1. The Complex Process. As explained in the nature of writing (2.2), developing writing skills is difficult because it must get through a complex process including planning, drafting, and revising (Hayes, J. R. and Flowers, 1980; Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005). In line with that, it also employs many activities such as reading, talking, observing, acting, making, thinking, feeling, and decoding words on paper (Hyland, 2002).
2. Anxiety and Panic. Anxiety has a positive correlation with the skills to write effectively and compose effective written pieces (Veit, 1980); (Hurd, 1985) (Aikman, 1985). The greater amount of anxiety improves learners' difficulty in composing writing from simple to complex format. The main issue is the intensifying pressure of writers' possibility of making mistakes and errors. In the end, anxiety even

decreases learners' motivation to write well. Typically, (Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005) mention panic is one of the problem that occurred in the process of writing. It is a kind of normal feeling like part of our genetic heritage. The feeling of too much worry will hinder the development of writers' performance. As a result, stress, panic, and anxiety are the common reasons that lead to writers' block (Ruschhaupt, 2010). In brief, Pharr and Buscemi (2005) describe that writers' block relates to our brain to produce words. In blocking situation, writers cannot produce words or they ignite very slowly even they want them to.

3. Time Constrains. Many students are afraid of a situation in which they have to write under pressure, such as drafting an essay in the class (Pharr and Buscemi, 2005). They are in a rush to finish their writing by neglecting the stages involved. For instance, skipping the step of pre-writing and planning will not save time, whereas it will drag the draft into a grave mistake.
4. Grammar. The lack of grammar knowledge is a fundamental problem to write correct sentences. (Omole, 2012) says:

“Many Nigerian undergraduates consider grammar as the most difficult and least interesting aspect of the teaching of composition. These students prefer to concentrate on the different types of essays and rhetorical approaches to writing them. In other words, they prefer the teaching of methods and actual practice”

Based on the observation from various classes, Omole exemplifies sentence complexity as the responsible agent for the error type of transitional words and phrases, pronoun reference, parallelism and repetition of key

terms in his students' writing. In the same vein, (Irmscher, 1979) states that poor grammar knowledge hinders writers from creating stylistic effects, diagnosing their own writing problems, and explaining those problems to others. In line with that, (Greenbaum, 1982)) explains that the problem of language rules will lead writers to analyze and use language with proficiency.

5. Vocabulary mastery becomes a challenge for some writers in composing a good piece of writings. Writers who fail to recognize sentence elements are stuck in a difficult condition to start their first sentence (Pardiyono, 2010). In this case, the sentence elements include predicate, subject, object, and adverbs. According to Pardiyono, predicate commonly relates to the vocabulary mastery of full verb, to be, active-passive, transitive-intransitive, present-past. Meanwhile, subject and object are commonly in the form of a noun. Eventually, the adverb is a set of vocabulary giving additional information about time date, day, place, condition, manner, and frequency.

In doing the writing, students should know the strategies of writing, namely short writing, frequent writing, dictionary usage and reading practice. The explanation of these four strategies is mentioned below.

The first is short writing which is introduced by (Jacobs, 1986) is basically identical with the activities of pre-writing (Karyn, E. Schweiker-Marra, William, 2000)(Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005).Pharr and Buscemi state that pre-writing may contain a number of poor phrases and sentences in the areas of words, phrase, empathy, parallel specific language etc. However, Karyn and Willian conclude that pre-writing activities scientifically affect students' writing performance and decrease anxiety. Based on Jacobs' research, he promotes three main activities during the activities of short writing.

They include content focus, sentence formation ignorance, and writing without stopping. Primarily, Quick writing aims to generate ideas. However, (Jacobs, 1986) also mentions some possible advantages:

“Other possible advantages of quick writing are in generating writing quantity, thinking in the target language, developing the ability to write under pressure of time, warming up for other writing, and understanding the need to edit.”

The focus is on the process of creating separated from the process of editing. Therefore, the process of editing, including revising, polishing, throwing away, is pulled out from the activity of quick writing. In support of that, (Brace, B., A. Collins, A. D. Rubin, 1982) *et al.* (1982) mentions that:

“When writers try to consider content and form simultaneously, the result is often slow, painful, uninspired writing; or worse, ‘writer’s block’ sets in and nothing comes out.”

While writers separate the process between making and correcting, they will exclude the experience of cumbersome process or blank sheet writing, which contains nothing. Finally, they will come out with a quantity of writing before they get into the process of editing.

The second is frequent writing. It is also claiming as a strategy that improves writing. (Karyn, E. Schweiker-Marra, William, 2000) argue that one of the factors influenced the range of writing skills in the intensity of practice. They find that the maturity of daily practice significantly improves students' writing expression. Likewise, (Pajares, F. and Valiante, 1997); (Walsh, 1986); (Thompson, 1981) found that inadequate practice possibly exposes students' fear. Besides, (Bernstein, 2004) advocates that:

'Frequent writing improves writing', 'Writing for an audience improves writing', 'Writing that matters improve writing', and 'Writing on a computer improves writing.'

Based on those previous researchers, it has been proven that frequent writing is a possible strategy to improve writing skills. The next is dictionary usage. (Ding, 2008) and (Bernstein, 2004) explicate that using a dictionary, internet, and online dictionary will help students to improve their writings. Bernstein argues that frequent writing will not necessarily improve writing if students do not use a dictionary or internet to support their writing process. In line with that, (Ding, 2008) also mentions the English dictionary, internet, and peers help them express their ideas. To conclude, using manual, digital, or online dictionary is an option to resolve vocabulary challenges while students are in the process of writing.

The last is reading practice. It is generally believed that reading and writing have a reciprocal relationship in which the improvement of reading skills and habits will develop writing skills. In support to that argument, (Pardiyono, 2010)) mention that students can write what they have read and spoken. It means that they are able to write what they have experienced and what stored in their long-term memory of knowledge.

Whereas, (King, 2000) argues that "If you don't have the time to read, you don't have the time or the tools to write." His statement shows us that the cause of writing ability is derived from the frequent practice of reading. In addition, the reading range and quality often have a correlation with students' development in writing (Education, 2012).

The last, Haryanti and Setyandari (2019) conclude in their research that students' multicultural background needs to be developed in structure courses. It is done by asking the

students to inform their hometown, their mother tongue, the language they master, their parents' address and languages, and their hobbies. Having known those data get them to make sentences by applying their habit, custom, or hobby besides focusing on the formulas or patterns.

METHOD

In this research, the participants come from English department. They were undergraduate students and were in the first semester when they took writing 1 class. In total, there are four classes of writing 1 accommodating 144 students. From that number, 47 students pass with excellent grade (GPA 4 of 4) and 17 students gain C grade or below (GPA 2 of 4 or below). Those 47 students are categorized as better students. On the contrary, the 17 ones belong to the novice ones.

The 47 better students observed, three students fortunately accept the request as participants in this research. Unfortunately, only one better student attends the interview session. Typically, a novice student out of 17 ones attends the interview. To conclude, this research employs two participants all together. Because they do not want to reveal their identity, I outlined their personal detail by using initial and student numbers.

Table 1. The list of participants

No	Category	Initial	Student number	GPA
1	Better student	B	113-13-074	A / 4
2	Novice student	N	113-13-083	C / 2

This research occupies two data generation tools including email observation and semi-structured interview. In details, those tools are consecutively explained in the following.

Email archive is the option as the medium to populate students' writing assignments in this research. In qualitative research, Chamberlain & (Thompson, 1981)

assert that the data can be collected from the personal documents. Former researchers made use of library books, archives and personal data collections (Mann, C. & Stewart, 2000).

Whereas, the second data generation tools are semi-structured interview used to collate the data. The interview itself belongs to a synchronous face-to-face meeting. Based on several studies, a semi-structured interview is an appropriate device in qualitative research through which to carry out in-depth exploration of specific social phenomena. (Creswell, 2008) asserts that the semi-structured interview can be used as one of the forms of data in qualitative research. In qualitative research, he argues that researchers can use broad and general questions to generate responses from the participants.

“Unlike the structure interview, the interviewer is expected to adapt, modify and add to the prepared questions if the flow of the interview talk suggests it” (Cousin, 2009).

Data preparation was the preliminary stage in which I observed email archive. At first, I collected the emails of writing assignment from the respondents in order to find the clues of their sentence building. This stage is conducted by accessing the lecturer’s email of Writing 1 subject. From thousand emails, I need to type the respondents’ name respectively in the searching box. As result, there will be a list of emails under the label of the first respondent. Similarly, the result also applies to the second respondent if we employ the same procedure. By conducting email observations, the sentence buildings can be identified and may lead to respondents’ challenges in writing. Further, the challenges can be confirmed during the interview stages.

I collected the data in October 2014 through an email observation. Further, the contents of the emails are replicated into

Microsoft Word. Having replicated in Microsoft Word, the data of email observation are tabulated into a computer file. Based on (Coombes, 2001) explanation, qualitative data is presented mostly in the form of tabulation. I decided to collate data in tabulated form so that it could be more easily analyzed. I choose Microsoft Word as (Coombes, 2001) asserts that a word processor is relevant software to produce documents for any research. In addition, data reduction is allowed before the data presentation (Miles, M.B. & Huberman, 1994). However, (Punch, 2009) suggests that the deducted data must still be significant and the main components can be used for the analysis. From this data processing, I can conclude the phenomena of dominant sentence type used by both better students and novice ones.

The interview is commenced by two mini tour questions as the opening session to identify the participants’ background in English language learning and writing experience. In addition, I outline general questions related challenges and strategies in writing sentences. Under those general questions, I also make several probing questions that might take place to follow up the participants’ responses. The probing questions were the initial sets that I might modify during the interview to extract more information.

During the interview process, the conversation was audio recorded, verbatim by using a digital recorder. In this stage, I wanted to explore the second and third question of the research about the challenges and respondents’ strategies in writing. As follow up stages, several probing questions will be delivered simultaneously during the interview to extract further.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Generally, a sentence appears in three different types, either simple compound sentences or complex sentences (Oshima, A and Hogue, 1996)2006(Pardiyono, 2010). From the finding,

there is a different tendency of sentence types between the better student and the novice one. The better student dominates her paragraph with complex sentences. Then, the rest is simple and compound sentence. Meanwhile, the novice student dominates her paragraph in the form of simple sentences followed up by complex and compound sentences and several fragments.

Out of 8 writing assignments in sentence building all together, the better student has submitted 7 writing assignments. Whereas, the novice one only hands in 4 writing assignments. In this light, the better student has practiced more writing than that of the novice student and she can create more effective and efficient in explaining the information in the form of complex sentences (Pardiyono, 2010). Therefore, it is not surprising if the better student acquires advanced writing skills. It is all because he has been through the repetitive writing process (Perl, 1980) in order to be good writer and writing stages of writing more as proposed by (Pennington, 1996).

As result of writing sentence building more, the better student levels up into higher range of writing skills in sentence building. It is in line with the argument of (Karyn, E. Schweiker-Marra, William, 2000); (Bernstein, 2004) that the frequent writing influences the range of writing skills. Karyn and William find that the maturity of daily practice significantly improves students' writing expression. On the contrary, (Pajares, F. and Valiante, 1997); (Walsh, 1986); (Thompson, 1981) found that inadequate practice possibly exposes students' fear. The indication can be concluded from the number of sentence complexity between the better and the novice students. The better one dare to write more sentences in form of complex sentences. Whereas, the novice one mostly occupies simple sentence because of the fear to avoid errors. Moreover, these tables describe the detail of sentence types.

Table 2. The result of email analysis from B (Better) respondent

Type	Total	Percentage
Simple sentences	20	38%
Compound sentences	5	10%
Complex sentences	27	52%
Fragments	0	0%
TOTAL SENTENCES	52	100%

Table 3. The result of email analysis from N (Novice) respondent

Type	Total	Percentage
Simple sentences	23	65%
Compound sentences	3	8%
Complex sentences	7	19%
Fragments	3	8%
TOTAL SENTENCES	36	100%

The nature of writing explains about a complex process in developing writing skills including planning, drafting, and (Flower, Linda & Hayes, 2004; Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005). In line with that, it also employs many activities such as reading, talking, observing, acting, making, thinking, feeling, and decoding words on paper (Hyland, 2002). The better student argues that in writing sentence building is relatively either difficult or easy. It changes to be difficult process in arranging sentence building because she has to think about the grammar and the content respectively. Worse, the novice students assume that writing is not easy.

The first respondent finds those feelings when starting the writing process that lead to difficulties in composing paragraphs. This condition is similar as the statement "The greater amount of anxiety improves learners' difficulty in composing writing from simple to complex format (Aikman, 1985; Veit, 1980). As result, she immerses in the condition of blocking (Ruschhaupt, 2010) in which she repeats the

same content in different sentences. In brief, in brief, (Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005) describe that writers' block relates to our brain to produce words. In blocking situation, writers cannot produce words or they ignite very slowly even they want them to.

Likewise, the novice student is afraid of making errors and receives negative comments. She also anxious and panic in finding a topic on her own. In addition, she will experience the same condition if she runs out of words to write. In this circumstance, the novice student experiences the intensifying pressure of possibility in making mistakes and errors (Aikman, 1985; Hurd, 1985; Veit, 1980).

Writing under pressure in the class is a hard time for both respondents. Limited time of drafting has been proved to ignite more fear for students (Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005). They are in rush to finish their writing by neglecting the stages involved. The first respondent reveals that she has a problem in using complex tenses such as perfect continuous tense. Her statement is in line with what (Omole, 2012) argues that sentence complexity as the responsible agent for the error type of transitional words and phrases, pronoun reference, parallelism and repetition of key terms in his students' writing based on the observation from various classes.

The grammar problems also occur toward the novice students. She always has a problem in grammar and tenses as what has exemplified by (Omole, 2012) that many Nigerian undergraduates consider grammar as the most difficult and least interesting aspect of the teaching of composition. As result, the novice has difficulties in combining sentences, gets confused to apply good grammar in her writing, becomes chaotic to write more sentences, and undecided to write what tenses should she uses in the next sentence. This is the effect, which is stated by (Irmscher, 1979). He said that poor grammar knowledge hinders writers to create stylistic effects, diagnose their

own writing problems, and explain those problems to others

The second, respondents find vocabulary as a challenge in sentence building when they have to write under an unfamiliar topic. The better student exemplifies that the topic on politics is difficult to write due to her limited vocabulary on the field of politics. Typically, the novice student sometimes gets difficult to find an appropriate diction due to the multiple meaning. When the have a few words in their memory, they will be stuck on a difficult condition to start their first sentence (Pardiyono, 2010).

Unconsciously, the better writing has applied the quick writing or pre writing strategies (Jacobs, 1986; Karyn, E. Schweiker-Marra, William, 2000; Pharr, D. and Buscemi, 2005). Although she does not know how to start her writing, she actually has applied pre writing activities by having free writing, in which she writes abruptly. The content seems to have poor and lack of accuracy. However, she will return to her writing to either check or edit it. By doing this strategy, she realizes errors that occur in her writing. On the contrary, the novice student does not employ this strategy in composing her writing.

Interestingly, the better students practice her writing in her daily basis. She compiles her writing in a special book and the writing cover wide range of different topics and grammar. He has proved that intensity of practice (Bernstein, 2004; Karyn, E. Schweiker-Marra, William, 2000) lead her to achieve excellent grade in her writing performance.

The novice student actually practices to write sentences in her diary to express her feeling and emotion. However, the schedule is not well managed and unfortunately, she writes in her native language; Indonesia. Therefore, her writing skills in English does not significantly improved during the course of writing.

From the interview result, both respondents state that they will look up

dictionary if they get stuck with difficult words. In addition, the novice students will have her friends help him to figure out the difficult vocabulary. Eventually, they can resolve their difficulties in vocabulary issues. At this point, they have proceeded the proper strategy of using dictionary, internet, and online dictionary to support their writing and express their ideas (Ding, 2008; Bernstein, 2004). Moreover, Bernstein believes that frequent writing will not necessarily improve writing if students do not use dictionary or internet to support their writing process.

The better student believes that her writing skills in sentence building are strongly affected by her reading habits. Her opinion is in line with (Pardiyono, 2010). He mentions that students can write what they have read and spoken. Besides that, (King, 2000) and (Education, 2012) also argues that the improvement of reading skills and habits will develop writing skills. Although the novice student does not disclose the similar opinion, she mentions that reading gives her an inspiration to write. It means that reading activities can lead her to find out a topic and an idea when the students write in sentence building.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, this study aims to explore three research questions. The conclusions can be described as follows:

This study has found that the complex sentence type dominates the writing of the better student in sentence building. On the contrary, the novice student tends to use simple sentences in her writing. In this light, the finding has responded to the first question about 'What types of sentence dominate the sentences building of novice and better students.'

The respondents identically disclose that there are five challenges in writing. The first challenge is the complex process in writing that has been experience by both respondents as

something difficult and complicated. Then, the second challenge is anxiety and panic that both respondents share the same experience. Their anxiety intensifies when they start writing process. Eventually, the feeling of too much worry has hindered their development of writing performance. The third challenge is time constrain that ignite more fear for students and make them own a hard time of under pressure writing. The fourth challenge is grammar that occurs in both respondents' life experience. However, the better and the novice student have different aspect and intensity of difficulties related to the challenge of grammar. The last challenge is vocabulary that mostly occurs in writing unfamiliar topic of discussion.

In line with the second research question, the findings have responded to the question about 'what are the challenges in arranging sentence building between novice and better students.' On the other hand, the students have four strategies in writing. The first strategy is quick writing in which students create a poor and lack of accuracy writing. The second strategy is frequent writing which has been practiced by the better student in her daily basis and significantly has been proven in improving her writing performance. The third strategy is dictionary usage. Both respondents look up dictionary to resolve difficult vocabulary during the writing process. In addition, the novice student may ask help from her friends to figure out the meaning of difficult words. The last strategy is reading practice that strongly affects writing skills. Besides that, reading practice also lead students to find out a topic and an idea to write.

In accordance with the third research question, these findings have responded to 'what are the students' strategies in writing'. To sum up, the findings have answered all three-research questions in this study. This study focuses on writing 1 subject which is the first writing subject in English department of IAIN Salatiga. The finding may be fundamental to support the

consideration in teaching the next level of writing classes especially in sentence building, which focus on paragraph, essay, academic papers, or other more complex writings. Therefore, the finding in this research may apply in the next level of writing and different contexts, but it is advisable to conduct further research as the comparative study which may find different result.

REFERENCE

- Aikman, C. (1985). *Writing anxiety—Barrier to success*. ERIC Document Reproductive Service.
- Arnold, K. M., Umanath, S., Thio, K., Reilly, W. B., McDaniel, M. A., & Marsh, E. J. (2017). Understanding the cognitive processes involved in writing to learn. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*, 23(2), 115–127. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000119>
- Bernstein, M. (2004). *Do weblogs improve writing?* http://markbernstein.org/Jan0401.html#note_35302
- Brace, B., A. Collins, A. D. Rubin, and D. G. (1982). Three perspectives on writing. *Educational Psychologist*, 17(3), 131–145.
- Coombes, H. (2001). *Research Using IT*. Palgrave.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Pearson.
- Ding, Z. (2008). *Application of Blog to English Language Teaching in China*.
- Education, O. (2012). *Me Read? No Way! A practical guide to improving boys' literacy skills*. Ontario Education: Ontario.
- Flower, Linda & Hayes, John. (2004). *A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing. College Composition and Communication*.
- Ginting, S. A. (2018). Syntactic Complexity on Extroverted and Introverted Indonesian Language Learners' Written Products. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 6(4), 101. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.6n.4p.101>
- Greenbaum, S. (1982). *What is grammar and why teach it?*
- Hartoyo. (2007). *Academic Writing-Integrating Grammar Into Basic Writing Skill*. Pelita Insani.
- Hayes, J. R. and Flowers, L. S. (1980). *Identifying the Organisation of Writing Process*. Hillsdale NJ: Erlbaum Associates.
- Hurd, R. (1985). *The effect of audience specification on writing anxiety, performance, and sensitivity to audience*. (No. ED 269 767)).
- Hyland, K. (2002). *Teaching and Researching*. Harlow. Longman.
- Irmscher, W. F. (1979). *Teaching expository writing*. Holt, Rinehard & Winston.
- Jacobs, G. (1986). Quick Writing. *ELT Journal*, 4(40), 282-290.
- Karyn, E. Schweiker-Marra, William, T. (2000). Investigating the Effects of Prewriting Activities on Writing Performance and

- Anxiety of At-Risk Students. *Reading Psychology*, 2(21), 99-114.
- King, S. (2000). *On writing: A memoir of the craft*. Pocket Books.
- Mann, C. & Stewart, F. (2000). *Internet Communication and Qualitative Research: A Handbook for Researching Online*. Sage.
- Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative Data Analysis. 2nd Edition*. Sage.
- Omole, O. (2012). *The Role of Grammar in The Teaching Of English Composition In Post Secondary Institutions*. University of Ilorin: Ilorin. http://www.unilorin.edu.ng/journals/education/ije/sept1988/THE_ROLE_OF_GRAMMAR_IN_THE_TEACHING_OF_ENGLISH_COMPOSITION_IN_POST_SECONDARY_INSTITUTIONS.pdf
- Oshima, A and Hogue, A. (1996). *Writing Academic Writing* (4th Editio). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Pajares, F. and Valiante, G. (1997). Influences of self-efficacy on elementary student's writing. *Journal of Educational Research*, 90(6), 353–360.
- Pardiyono. (2010). *Revealing Clues for Easy Sentence Building*. Pustaka Pelajar.
- Pennington, M. C. (1996). Writing the Natural Way: On Computer. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 9(2–3), 125-142.
- Perl, S. (1980). Perl, S. (1980) Understanding composing. *College Composition and Communication*, 31(4), 363-369.
- Pharr, D. and Buscemi, S. V. (2005). *Writing today*. McGraw-Hill.
- Punch, K. F. (2009). *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*. SAGE.
- Ruschhaupt, P. (2010). *Overcoming Writer's Block*. University of Housto: Victoria. <http://www.uhv.edu/StudentSuccessCenter/study/pdf/writers.block.pdf>
- Thompson, M. O. (1981). A workshop: Coping with writing anxiety. *Workshop of the National Council of Teachers of English*.
- Veit, R. (1980). Reducing anxiety in writing instruction. *The Annual Meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English*.
- Walsh, S. M. (1986). New directions in research on writing apprehension. *The L. Ramon Veal Seminar of the National Council of Teachers of English Conference*.
- Zamel, V. (1982). Writing: The Process of Discovering Meaning. *TESOL QUARTERLY*, 16(2), 60–74.