Linguistics

Run-on and Fragment Sentences: An Error Analysis in Indonesian English Learners' Writings

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ABSTRACT

Run-on and fragment sentences provide clues as to how English learners understand English sentences and how English learners organize information and shape their essays. This research was based on a group case study of run-on and fragment sentences in English college students' essays, using an English Sentence Completeness approach to investigate how English college students make an error on making a sentence in their English essays and discusses the further pedagogical implications based on the errors pattern found. English college students were found to do run-on in their sentences more often than fragments. They write more than one subject and one verb in a sentence and significantly forget to limit their sentences. The carelessness in punctuation and a period between sentences make the sentence permitted to "run on" into the next. Besides run-on, fragments were also found in students' essays: Missing subject and verb conditions are significantly found in the students' sentences. These findings revealed that English college students lack knowledge of how to make complete sentences in ordering information and building up a text's structure. Therefore the learning process of English writing should be informed of the importance of English sentence completeness in organizing a text and introduce the strategies for avoiding and making less run-on and fragment sentences through practice activities and writing assignments. This research is qualitative descriptive-explorative research where descriptive and explorative are intended to describe and explain the situation based on collected data and facts, which are then analyzed and arranged systematically to get conclusions in detail to be a hypothesis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers across all academic disciplines must deal with students' poor writing, even at the college level. The sentence fragment and the run-on sentence are among the most prevalent errors of grammatical problems found in students' essays. Some students seem to have no feeling for a sentence's completeness. Are their errors as random as they often appear, or are there a pattern to the fragments and run-ons that poor writers mistakenly regard as complete sentences? The present study assumed that faulty perception might account for the persistent production of run-ons and fragments. Relationships between perception and the decoding of written language have been well established (Gibson, 1965; Gibson & Levin, 1975; Grabe, 1978; Mason, 1975; Otto, 1977; Steinheiser & Guthrie, 1977).

Different from the previous researchers that focused on analyzing the reason behind the performance of run-ons and fragment sentence in students' essays (Brown, 1957; Berko, 1958; Dale, 1976; Zutell, 1978), this study try to find and investigate how English college students make an error on making a sentence in their English essays, and discusses the further pedagogical implications based on the errors pattern found. By analyzing the pattern and the weaknesses of students in making and knowing English complete sentences, it is hoped that this research will be able to improve the

English writing learning process, especially with materials and methods that are more effective in the future as an answer to solving problems from existing field conditions.

The purpose of the present studies was (a) to look for patterns in the surface structure of fragments and run-ons that miscued boundaries of complete written sentences, and (b) to infer general rules that subjects may have used in judging the completeness of sentences. How do poor writers define a written "sentence"?

Two limitations of the present studies should be noted. First, the studies were limited to written sentences. The next limitation of the present studies was that subjects' judgments of complete sentences were ignored. The focus here was on the subjects' perceptions and patterns of errors, not on non-errors.

II. METHOD

The research is qualitative research. The method used in this research is the descriptive method. Descriptive, in this case, aims to describe and explain the existing situation based on data and facts collected without justifying the right and wrong of a phenomenon which is then systematically arranged for further analysis to get detailed, meaningful, and deep conclusions.

Participants and the task

Participants in this study consisted of a group of students that are 25 college students. The college students were English majors in their first year of studying English as their field of study. All the participants were asked to write an argumentative essay on one specific topic, "The controversy of Covid-19 vaccinations". The students ask to write their opinion on the pros and cons of vaccinations related to Covid-19.

The data

The data in this research comprised 25 essays collected in Elementary Reading and Writing's subject course. All the essays were used with the permission of the participants concerned.

Analytical framework

An English sentence completeness analytical framework by Warriner (1988, pp. 339-344) was adopted to analyze the student essays. The writer focused on analyzing the sentences that appear in students' essays as the basic unit of analysis. The

T-unit also was used as a unit of analysis in this research. A T-unit is a complex clause containing one main independent clause together with all the hypotactic clauses that are dependent on it (Fries, 1995). The sentences and clauses were used in the present research because they can be justified sentences completeness and identify the run-on and fragment sentences that appeared.

Procedures

The following procedure was used in the analysis of the English essays:

(1) Locating and numbering each sentence and clause;

(2) Identifying the run-on division in each sentence with a code "r" by analyzing the subject and verb of the sentences and clauses;

(3) Identifying the fragment sentences division in each sentence with a code "f" by analyzing the subject and verb of the sentences and clauses;

(4) Conducting descriptive analyses and sentences completeness analyses to identify the error pattern that appeared.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Run-on and Fragment Sentences in English college students' Essays

By using an English Sentence Completeness approach to investigate how English college students make an error in making a sentence in their 25 English essays, it was found that English college students who enroll in Elementary Reading and Writing class do run-on in their sentences more often than fragments. 46 sentences can be categorized and identified as run-on while 9 sentences can be categorized and identified as a fragment. It can be seen as shown in the following diagram.
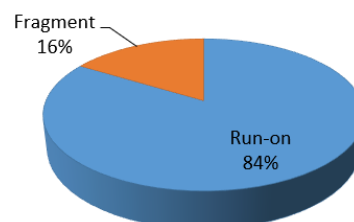

Figure 1. The percentage of sentence incompleteness in English college students' essays

Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that students write more than one subject and one verb in a sentence and significantly forget

to limit their sentences. The carelessness of using punctuation and a period between sentences, giving an impact to the sentence permitted to "run on" into the next. Besides of run-on, fragments were also found in students' essays. Missing subject conditions are significantly found in the students' fragment sentences.

Table 1. Realization of Error in English college students' essays

No	Type of Sentence Incompleteness	Category of error	Frequency
1.	Run-on	Double Verb	9
		Double Subject and Verb	28
		Overlapping	9
	Total Frequency of Run-on		46
2.	Fragment	Missing Subject	3
		Missing Verb	2
		Missing Subject and Verb	2
		Dependent Clause fragment	2
	Total Frequency of Fragment		9

Run-on Sentences, Fragment Sentences, and Learning Process

In making an essay, students significantly make some errors in their writing. The sentence fragment and the run-on sentence are the most prevalent errors of grammatical problems which are always found in students' essays. Some students seem to have absolutely no feeling for the completeness of a sentence. From the table and diagram shown in the previous section, it can be seen how English college students make an error in their sentences. Run-on and fragment with some pattern such as using a double verb, double subject, and double sentences written in one sentence, and making sentences with missing subject, verb, and dependent clause fragment be the dominant errors pattern that students did.

Run-on sentences

A run-on sentence is two or more sentences that are incorrectly written as one sentence. A run-on can happen when we have forgotten to limit our sentences. The carelessness in punctuation and a period matter between sentences, making the sentence is then permitted to "run on" into the next (Warriner, 1988).

Based on the results of the analysis of the sentence incompleteness that appeared, in English students' college essays in Elementary Reading and Writing Class in the English Department at Andalas University, it is found that students do run-on more significant than the other error. It can be seen in the following example of run-on,

(1) My opinion on this controversy about vaccinations is, we have to agree about vaccination. (Run-on, double verb)

(2) Our obligation right now is we must prevent the spread of this pandemic at all costs. (Run-on, double verb)

(3) The first reason is people want to be vaccinated is that vaccines can make our immune system stronger. (Run-on, double verb)

(4) This is because there are some peoples who think that the corona virus is just a hoax, this kind of distrust also makes people not want to be vaccinated. (Run-on, double subject and verb)

(5) But if in my opinion vaccination is an obligation for the community, because it is also part of the responsibility for our own health, by vaccinating we can increase the body's resistance so that it is not easy to contract the disease, and also help the government's efforts in dealing with the epidemic. (Run-on, double subject and verb)

(6) In conclusion, taking a vaccine is not entirely safe but definitely worth the risk, the numbers and data shows that cases has started to decline as more and more people are getting vaccinated. (Run-on, double subject and verb)

(7) An example of a hoax that makes people doubt is that the vaccine provided can cause death when used, there are also those who do not believe in the existence of Covid 19 so they don't want to be vaccinated, and some are afraid to go vaccinate because when they go out from there home they get infected by Covid 19, but as I said, it's just a hoax and has been proven by the Ministry of Communication and Information, and myself have felt the covid 19 virus has been infected me and I have received the vaccine and it didn't happen as the hoax said, and it was also proven when the first vaccine was on January 13, 2021, which was done by President Joko Widodo, so far nothing has happened to Mr. President Joko Widodo. (Run-on, double subject and verb)

(8) On the contrary, Indonesia's mandatory vaccine program reap contra among the public because of administrative sanctions in the form of delaying or stopping the provision of social

security or social assistance, delaying or stopping the provision of government administration as well as fines as stated in Constitution 13A clause (4) for people who do not want to do the vaccination program. (Run-on, overlapping)

(9) The Covid-19 vaccination is one of the many government programs in tackling the corona virus outbreak, but in the midst of the government's efforts there are still many people who refuse to be vaccinated. (Run-on, overlapping)

In the sentences above, we can see how the error pattern such as using a double verb, double subject and verb, and double sentences written in one sentence appeared in English students' essays. If we look at the errors more comprehensively, the knowledge of students in making English sentences and the carelessness of punctuation matter are the reasons why students make these kinds of errors happened. For example, in using double subject and verb in one sentence such as below,

An example of a hoax that makes people doubt is that the vaccine provided can cause death when used, there are also those who do not believe in the existence of Covid 19 so they don't want to be vaccinated, and some are afraid to go vaccinate because when they go out from there home they get infected by Covid 19, but as I said, it's just a hoax and has been proven by the Ministry of Communication and Information, and myself have felt the covid 19 virus has been infected me and I have received the vaccine and it didn't happen as the hoax said, and it was also proven when the first vaccine was on January 13, 2021, which was done by President Joko Widodo, so far nothing has happened to Mr. President Joko Widodo. (Run-on, double subject and verb)

From the length of the sentences, we can see how the sentences overlap with each other. The student does not care about punctuation matters in his sentence, namely forgetting to use and putting a period between the sentences. This problem impacts the presence of double subject and verb in one sentence. The following is an example of a detailed analysis of errors that appeared,

"An example of a hoax that makes people doubt is that the vaccine provided can cause death when *1 used,*2 there are also those who do not believe in the existence of Covid 19 so they don't want to be vaccinated*3 , *4 and some are afraid to go vac-

cinate because when they go out from there home they get infected by Covid 19*5 , *6 but as I said, it's just a hoax and has been proven by the Ministry of Communication and Information*7 , *8 and myself have felt the covid 19 virus has been*9 infected me and I have received the vaccine and it didn't happen as the hoax said *10 , *11 and it was also proven when the first vaccine was on January 13, 2021, which was done by President Joko Widodo*12 , *13 so far nothing has happened to Mr. President Joko Widodo." (-r/run-on)

*1: The student forgot to add subject "it"
*2: The student put semicolon in here. The correct one is put a period and making a new sentence after that
*3: It must be a new sentence
*4: The student put semicolon in here. The correct one is put a period and making a new sentence after that
*5: It must be a new sentence
*6: The student put semicolon in here. The correct one is put a period and making a new sentence after that
*7: It must be a new sentence
*8: The student put semicolon in here. The correct one is put a period and making a new sentence after that
*9: The student put double verb in here
*10: It must be a new sentence
*11: The student put semicolon in here. The correct one is put a period and making a new sentence after that
*12: It must be a new sentence
*13: The student put semicolon in here. The correct one is put a period and making a new sentence after that

In order to make the sentence complete, we can use four methods that are 1) simply making two sentences; 2) linking the sentences with a conjunction (coordinating conjunctions such as *and, but, or* and *etc.*); 3) using a semicolon; 4) adding subordinating conjunctions.

For instance, the sentence must be revised in the following form,

"An example of a hoax that makes people doubt is that the vaccine provided can cause death when it used. There are also those who do not believe in the existence of Covid 19 so they don't want to be vaccinated. Some are afraid to go vaccinate because when they go out from their home, they get infected by Covid 19. As I said, it's just a hoax and has been proven by the Ministry of Communication and Information. I have felt the covid 19 virus and received the vaccine, and it

didn't happen as the hoax said. It was also proven when the first vaccine was on January 13, 2021, which was done by President Joko Widodo. So far nothing has happened to Mr. President Joko Widodo." (Sentence)

Fragment sentences

Fragment sentences are groups of words that do not express a complete thought (Warriner, 1988). They are only part of a sentence. A fragment can happen when we have forgotten to add the element of the sentence in our sentences such as verb, subject, and the main clause.

In general, they are four types of sentence fragments that people do in their writing, namely 1) missing subject fragments; 2) missing verb fragments; 3) missing a subject and a verb fragments; and 4) dependent clause fragments. Based on the data analysis, it was found that four types of fragment sentences are appeared in the English college students' essays in Elementary and Reading class. It can be seen in the following example,

(1) the covid 19 virus that hit Indonesia. (Fragment, missing verb)

(2) However, anything the pros and cons. (Fragment, missing verb)

(3) But in the Covid-19 vaccination program, gives rise to a new polemic where not a few people who take this vaccination program for granted. (Fragment, missing subject)

(4) To provide immunity to disease and can stimulate the formation of immunity in the body (Fragment, missing subject)

(5) Especially in children and adolescents. (Fragment, missing subject and verb)

(6) Especially with the news that anyone who refuses to vaccinate will be subject to administrative sanctions and even criminal sanctions. (Fragment, missing subject and verb)

(7) When it was announced that a Covid-19 vaccination would be carried out and the vaccination was not only intended for medical personnel but all Indonesian people, and it became a conversation that reaped the pros and cons of the Indonesian people. (Fragment, dependent clause fragment)

(8) While the contra usually arises due to the lack of adequate information and lots of hoaxes that are spreading on social media. (Fragment, dependent clause fragment)

In the sentences above, we can see how the error pattern of fragments appeared. If we look at the errors, the knowledge of students in making English sentences and the carelessness of making a complete idea and thought in one sentence be the reasons why students make these kinds of errors happened. The students only used a piece of information and additional information to be a sentence without caring too much about the key information needed in a sentence such as who is the actor and what happened, which are brought by the element of a sentence such as verb and subject. It is like the students only give incompleteness things of their sentence both in terms of completeness of the information and grammatical elements of a sentence. For example, in the sentence such as below,

"Especially in children and adolescents."
(Fragment, missing subject and verb)

In this sentence, grammatical elements of an English sentence are missing, namely the subject and the verb. In this sentence, the student did not tell who and what happened in his sentence. The information that is presented does not have a meaning. We cannot understand what the students mean by their sentences, including their topics, the context, and the purpose. In order to make the sentence complete, we can add the subject, the verb, and connect the dependent clause to an independent clause (a group of words with a subject and a verb that expresses a complete thought).

Learning Process

Learning is a process, so making an error in a learning process is natural. In the theory of learning, we learn how the change of stimulus will generate a response according to mechanistic law. Learning is a phenomenon that grows associations between one event to another event which are called stimulus (S) with response (R) (Thorndike, 1903). Stimulus here refers to a change in an external environment that becomes a sign to activate an organism to react and act while response refers to behavior raised by a stimulus. So, in order to make a success in the learning process, giving of a right stimulus is compulsory.

Choosing the right stimulus is not an easy thing to find. Some practice, trial, and error are needed in this process. The more often you give a chance to an organism facing a new condition and situation, the more results to the giving of a new response

(trial) by an organism you get because basically in every stimulus will be found a response.

According to the discussion of the law of learning (Thorndike, 1903), there are three main concepts in learning that need to be; those are (i) law of readiness, (ii) law of exercise, and (iii) law of effect. Firstly is the law of readiness. In this law, we must pay attention to the learner's condition. The learner must be ready and in good condition in order to be success in their learning. Readiness here must be in psychology and physics. Ready in physic means the learner is not in sick condition, and ready in psychology means the learner do not have mental sickness and other.

Second is the law of exercise. To result suitable and satisfied response stimulus, a person should try and practice frequently. Suitable and satisfied action can be acquired in learning and the behavior of the trial is an existence of improvement behavior to make the behavior stronger. To make them remembered by the long term memory of a person, he or she should repeatedly do an action to record the behavior to short term memory, and it will be continued to long term memory. According to Thorndike (1903), the main principle of learning is repetition because of that teacher needs to give a question (stimulus), so the students will answer it (respond). It will make the prestige of student increase. The principle of the exercise law is the connection between condition and action which can be strong by doing exercises. However, it will be weak if the connection between both of them is stopped. In this case, we can say that exercises contain two things. First is The Law of Use; that is connections between condition and action can be strong if there is an exercise. Second is The Law of Disuse; that is, connections between condition and action can be weak if the exercise is stopped.

The third is the law of effect. In education, the law of effect happens to someone who gives punishment or reward. However, in education, the thing that can give a reward will be more effective than punishment.

Thorndike (1903) also adds some additional laws that were important in the learning process that are "law of multiple responses". This law states that every individual is begun by trial and error, which shows kinds of responses before the individual finds the correct response to overcome the problem. In this case, the individual will use their analogy and reasoning to choose the correct response. In Thorndike's theory, learning is oriented to results that can be measured and observed. An error must be fixed immediately, and repetition and exercise are used to make the behavior become a habit. The result of the application of behaviorist theory is forming an expected behavior in which the expected behavior can be strengthened positively. Unexpected behavior can be deleted.

Focusing on this research, the application of Thorndike's theory in learning consists of a practice value in learning procedure can be applied in order to solve the problem of sentence incompleteness that appeared in English college students' essays in the Elementary Reading and Writing class. It can be done by some steps such as advancing of environment's effect, emphasizing detailed parts, emphasizing the role of reaction, considering important mechanisms of how stimulus and response build a learning result, advancing build a habitual through training (exercise), repetition, and expected learning result.

In detail, we can make our learning process more effective by doing the following things. First, it starts with your students. Students should be prepared in mental firstly. A teacher must conduct a good atmosphere in class. Next, do a regular test or exercise or drilling system. A teacher needs to know the weaknesses and problems faced by his students; for example, in this case, making a complete sentence where the students in significant numbers are doing run-on in their sentences (using double subject and verb). In this case, the teacher can be more focused on teaching about run-on in detail and how to solve this (by mastering subject and verb in English). Some practices are required and need to be given to the students more often so they can be familiar with this problem and know how to react and face this problem by the correct action (respond). By doing practice and practice, the students will keep in their mind how to react appropriately to this problem and solve it. The correct response will save in their long term memory and it can be a habit. Lastly, teachers need to give supervision, reward, and praise to grow strategic effect for students. The teacher should not give lecturing, but short and clear instruction which is followed by a good example. The lesson material is arranged hierarchically from a simple one to the complex one.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The result of the study found that the English college students of Andalas University in

Elementary Reading and Writing Class still have a problem on how to make a complete sentence in English. In making a sentence, the students still make some errors such as doing run-ons and fragments in their sentences. In this research, we found that the students do run-on in their sentences more often than fragment. They write more than one subject and one verb in a sentence and significantly forget to limit their sentence. The carelessness in punctuation and a period between sentences make the sentence permitted to "run on" into the next. Besides run-on, other problems such as fragment sentences were also found in students' essays. Missing subject and verb conditions are significantly found in the students' sentences. These findings revealed that English college students lack knowledge of how to make complete sentences in order information and build up a text's structure. Therefore the learning process of English writing should be informed of the importance of English sentence completeness in organizing a text and introduce the strategies for avoiding and making less run-on and fragment sentences by means of activities, more practices, and writing assignments.

In this research, the purpose of the studies was limited (a) to look for patterns in the surface structure of fragments and run-ons that miscued boundaries of complete written sentences, and (b) to infer general rules that subjects may have used in judging the completeness of sentences. Further studies about English complete sentences and grammar problems in English learning are welcomed.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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