

ONLINE WRITELOGUE EFFECTIVENESS IN THE STUDENTS' MASTERY OF THE REDUCED RELATIVE CLAUSES

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ABSTRACT

In this pandemic Covid-19 situation, all teaching learning activities are done online from the elementary school up to the universities. What the writers would do is actually implementing a blended learning, but Covid-19 makes it impossible so that it is done fully online. Thus, this study would find out that the full-online platform writelogue with its module can improve the students' ability in using the reduced relative clauses. This module in which the students learn the NP pattern 'HN (Head Noun) + reduced relative clauses' is one of a number of NP patterns in the writers' multi-year research. Using the accessibility of the Learning Management System, the writelogue, the students did the pre-test, the exercises and the post-test. Besides, they filled out the questionnaire concerning the usability of the writelogue in terms of language, exercises, tutorial video, and technical operation. The results show that the online writelogue course enhances the pre-test scores of the students in their post-test result, and the students find the benefits of the writelogue course to their learning the reduced relative clause on line.

Keywords: *reduced relative clause, writelogue*

INTRODUCTION

Students are expected to write papers in journals, either national or international ones as the decree of Indonesia Ministry of Research and Technology asks students to publish their papers. Publishing papers in international journals is not easy since the students are supposedly able to express ideas effectively and efficiently. Their ideas must be put in grammatical sentences which are made up of phrases and clauses. The most phrases that appear in sentences are noun phrases formed by head nouns (HN) and other modifying phrases or clauses. These modifying phrases or clauses can be classified as premodifiers or postmodifiers.

To be able to write mature sentences, students have to master how to construct beyond simple sentences. They have to be able to write complex sentences and compound-complex sentences. When we analyse parts of a sentence, noun phrases are mostly found either they occupy the position of a subject, or an object of a verb in the predicate. Noun Phrases (NPs) are constructed in a numerous number, one of which is a noun phrase followed by a participial phrase as a postmodifier. It is through a structural clue that different functions of an NP can be functionally identified (DeCapua, 2017).

This paper is a part of a three-year research entitled "*Penggunaan dan Pembentukan Frasa Nomina Dalam Karangan Eksposisi Oleh Mahasiswa Indonesia*" (in English "The Use and Formation of Noun Phrases in Indonesian Students' Exposition") and the research applies a hybrid course with online learning system due to the pandemic Covid-19. The writers aim to investigate whether the online course influences the students' achievement in using HN+Participial Phrase pattern in which the participial phrase is the post modifier. This paper

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also looks into how significant the impact of online teaching and learning is to the students' comprehending HN+Participial Phrase pattern.

ONLINE LEARNING

Hrastinski (2009) quoted Jonassen & Land (2000) that learning involves internal dialogue and social negotiation. The active participation in learning engages the learners themselves and between learners or between teachers and learners. It would give benefits as experience is shared with each other. Language and communication become the features of knowledge and learning. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, education changes drastically as schools use digital platforms to administer teaching-learning activities throughout the world. Hrastinski further says that online learner participation is complex as the participants – learners as well as teachers – have to maintain relations.

Li (2020) states that Covid-19 makes the teaching and learning process change drastically from being in a classroom to a digital platform. There is no physical contact between learners, or between teachers and learners. This happens in all countries in the world. This study also gets the impact of the pandemic. The teaching-learning activities are using the *writelogue* was planned to be a blended learning; however, all is done on line due to the pandemic. There is supposedly no physical contacts, or teaching-learning activities are to be conducted off line. Actually, education technology has been growing even before the pandemic and it has been adopted in many education institutions in the world. The covid-19 makes education technology develop even faster.

This study has made a digital platform of its own, i.e. *writelogue*. It is a learning management system that learners can use when they want to know a lot more about noun phrases (NPs). They can access all the modules in the platform. What this study is focusing is the reduced relative clauses. Concerning the platform, the study also investigates how the students as subjects of the study respond to the use of *writelogue* as education technology.

NOUN PHRASES

Linguistically grammar is defined as “a system or the ‘blueprints’ for creating language” and grammatically it is the written rules to follow to use the language correctly (DeCapua, 2017). As grammar is the written rules of a language, words are constructed in order to show grammatical relationships. Thus, words are very essential element in a sentence.

Words are categorized as major class words and minor class words. The major class words are commonly content words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, while the minor class words are prepositions, pronouns, conjunctions, and determiners. It is an NP that dominates sentences. DeCarrio and Larsen-Freeman (2002) state that a sentence is a construction derived from grammatical rules of language in which Noun Phrases (NP) often appear. An NP is composed of Head Noun (HN) with its premodifiers and post modifiers. NPs occupy the subject position or subject complement, and function as objects of verbs, or objects of prepositions in the predicate of a sentence. That is why NPs play an important role in a sentence. To construct effective and efficient sentences, students have to be able to combine ideas into NPs. In higher level, students are expected to be able to use complex NPs in their texts, especially their academic texts. By doing so, their sentences are mature.

REDUCED RELATIVE CLAUSES

They are “relative clauses without having a full verb phrase” (Capua, 2017). In a relative clause, its relative pronoun functions as the subject of the clause. As the relative pronoun functions as the subject, it can be omitted and its verb phrase becomes participial forms, either present participial phrase when the verb phrase senses an ‘active’ action, or past participial phrase when the verb phrase senses a ‘passive’ action, respectively seen in the following examples, *All workers renovating the building use masks to avoid the Covid-19 virus*, and *Those infected by the Covid-19 virus have to lock themselves at home or stay in hospital*. Both participial phrases come from relative clauses where the relative pronouns function as subject: *All workers who renovate the building use masks to avoid the Covid-19 virus*, and *Those who are infected by the Covid-19 virus have to lock themselves at home or stay in hospital*.

Freeman, Freeman and Soto (2017) state that academic language contains complex sentences, and that learners of English as well as learners of Standard English are supposedly able to write texts containing complex sentences. Reduced relative clauses and relative clauses are only some features of complex sentences. In an academic text, the language structures include nominalization, passives and complex sentences. When an academic text contains complex sentences, it indicates part of the maturity of the text. The learning of grammar should not only be seen as an end in itself. Paradowski (2008) states that it must be implemented in communication. When the students have learned a new language form, it must be made meaningful to the students so that they can demonstrate its usefulness. Language is situational, contextualized and purposive.

METHOD

This study uses the accessibility of Learning Management System (LMS), an independent collaborative way of learning with unlimited time and distance (Koutsodimou and Jimoyiannis, 2015). In this pandemic situation, it employs an online system of the *writelogue*.

The test, which is a pre-test and a post-test, consists of five sections: 1) multiple-choice items, 2) Noun Phrase formation with reduced adjective clause, 3) word-order, 4) error analysis, and 5) sentence building. Each section has fifteen items, except section 5 which asked students to make 5 sentences, but all those five sentences are considered to be in one number, i.e. number 61. Whenever there is one mistake found in number 61, it is scored 0. Score 1 applies when all sentences are correct. After calculated, the reliability of the test is 0.841.

At home the students were asked to see the lesson video and study the lesson slides concerning the reduced relative clause before they did the exercises which consisted of exactly the same sections as in the pre-test. The video, the slides and the exercises were the enrichment for the students to improve their knowledge and writing skill before they took the post-test. The questionnaires were also asked to be filled out to know whether the online learning was beneficial to the students. The questionnaires consisted of four elements namely the language, the tutorial video, the exercises and the technical difficulties.

The table below shows the mean score between the pre-test and the post-test:

Descriptive Statistics

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Minimum | Maximum | Percentiles | | |
|--|---|------|----------------|---------|---------|-------------|------------------|------|
| | | | | | | 25th | 50th (Median) | 75th |
| | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----|-------|--------|----|----|-------|-------|-------|
| pretest | 16 | 61.19 | 13.838 | 41 | 85 | 50.00 | 61.00 | 71.75 |
| posttest | 16 | 77.13 | 16.784 | 40 | 94 | 71.00 | 80.00 | 90.00 |

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to obtain the sig. value of whether the online *writelogue* course influences the students' ability to master HN= reduced relative clause. It resulted that the sig-value was 0.003 which is smaller than 0.05. It indicates that there is a difference between the scores the students got in the pre-test and those in the post-test when online learning was applied. See the table below:

Test Statistics^a

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| | posttest - pretest |
| Z | -2.974 ^b |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .003 |

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

b. Based on negative ranks.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 976 answers since there were sixteen students participating in the post-test with sixty-one items, 46 were still a problem in arranging words correctly, 23 in forming NPs where the HN is followed by reduced relative clauses, and 21 in identifying and correcting errors. The problems were taken when there were still more than five wrong answers for each test item.

| # of Problems in HN+Reduced Relative Clause | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|
| Arranging words | NP Formation | Error Analysis |
| 46 | 23 | 21 |
| 4.71% | 2.36% | 2.15% |

In word order/ arrangement, the students have problems with morphological forms such as **variants food*, instead of *food variants*. They did not know that *variant* is a noun, rather than an adjective. They might refer to words such as *redundant*, *reluctant*, and *significant* which are adjectives. In addition, the plural -es shows that the word *variant* is not an adjective. It is a feature of a noun. Another problem is the order of adverbs of manner and those of place. **sitting and typing in his yellow desk very fast*, instead of *sitting and typing very fast in his yellow chair*. The order is MPT (Manner, Place and Time). In the test item, the correct order should be *sitting and typing very fast in his yellow chair*. Meaning of words also play an important role in comprehending the test item as in **singing and reading bedtime stories and lullaby*. Such an answer can be interpreted like **reading lullabies*. The word *lullaby* means a soothing song or music, and it is sung by the parents so that the child can sleep. Thus, **reading lullabies* cannot be used.

In NP formations in this case forming HN (Head Noun) + reduced relative clause, the students have problems with the verb 'have' and the auxiliaries of the Present Perfect Tense 'has' and 'have' as in *The light house which has its light on...*, and *...all the work that has been done...*. The students' responses vary such as **had the light on*, **its light on*, **being done...*, **had been done...*, **had been done*. Actually, the verb *has* becomes *having* in the case of *which has its light on*. The verb is formed into *having* while a perfect-tense auxiliary is also

formed into 'having' for all kinds of subjects of sentences like *I, we, you, they, he, she, and it*. In the reduced relative clause, its verb becomes present participial form or past participial form, and when there is such an auxiliary as 'has', 'have' or 'had', the auxiliary becomes 'having'. So, those sentences should be *The light house having its light on ...*, and *...all the work having been done...*

In Error Analysis, to correct *This faculty has a special class which was consisting of students from different cities...* the students used **consisted, *consist, *consists* while the correct form is 'consisting' which has an 'active' meaning. Another error occurs in *...you are the one who is held accountable for it*. The expression 'hold accountable for' means 'consider someone to be responsible for something'. The students' responses are **holding accountable for*, and **who held accountable for*. The latter is not a reduced relative clause. The relative clause is in a passive construction; so, its reduced clause is *held accountable for*.

In the writing session of the post-test, what is most important to discuss is the students' inability to differentiate the reduced relative clause from the reduced adverbial clause. Both have '-ing' forms but the previous one originates from an adjective clause and the latter from an adverb clause. For examples, *Tom did the test lying on his bed* originates from *Tom did the test while he was lying on his bed*. The adverb clause *while he was lying on his bed* has the same subject as to refer to *Tom* in the main clause *Tom did the test*, and the adverb clause form can be reduced to *while lying on his bed*, or *lying on his bed*. Or, *Lying on his bed, Tom did the test*. The reduced adverb clause *lying on his bed* tells how Tom did the test. On the other hand, *lying on his bed* can be in a form of reduced relative clause as in a sentence *Tom lying on his bed did the test*. The participial phrase *lying on his bed* originates from *who was lying on his bed*. The reduced relative clause *lying on his bed* modifies the noun *Tom*, so the clause functions as an adjective.

Another problem that occurs in writing is the students still tend to use fragments such as *The event conducted by local residents*, *The social service carried out by the community* in which passive reduced relative clauses can be found, but both are not complete sentences. *Conducted by local residents* and *carried out by the community* modify the nouns *The event* and *The social service*, meaning both fragments are NPs. Since they are NPs, no main predicates are found when those NPs are made subjects. A sentence consists of one main subject and one main predicate.

In addition, to form a passive reduced relative clause, the students have to master the past participial verbs. The following example does not show the students' mastery of that verb form, especially the irregular one: **Black sunglasses wore by my dad is expensive*. The past participial verb form of the verb *wear* is *worn*, not *wore*. The reduced relative clause should have a passive meaning.

Besides looking into the students' errors in using the reduced relative clauses, this study would also like to perceive the effectiveness of the online learning in the *writelogue*. A questionnaire in the *writelogue* has to be filled out by the students after they have done the post-test. There are four points to discuss, namely the language, the tutorial video, the exercises, and the technical difficulties.

Most students agree that they did not have much difficulty in understanding the language used. Fourteen out of sixteen students (87.50%) said that the language did not employ many unfamiliar words to them. There were some words whose meanings they did not know, but they did not impede the understanding of the whole items in the test. So, the vocabulary and the complexity of the language used are not a hindrance to comprehend the module.

The tutorial video was very useful for the students to understand the module. No one disagreed its usefulness. All of the students agreed that through the video they understood the topic better. They also felt that it was like they reviewed what they had learned in the class. It brought them back to the Structure class they had taken some semesters ago. They even got more knowledge about the topic. The tutorial video opened up their mind of how to use the reduced relative clauses so that they gained knowledge how to write using the clauses.

The exercises could also improve the students' ability to write. They improved their grammar concerning the reduced relative clauses and were able to apply the clauses in writing. In the module, they practiced how to form NPs with reduced relative clauses, how to put words in an order using reduced relative clauses, which choices are correct related to reduced relative clauses, and how to identify and correct errors. These practices help the students build the concept of the reduced relative clauses.

How do the students deal with the module? What learning strategies did the students employ before doing the exercises? Some watched the explanation first in the video or read the slides, some skimmed the slides but they watched and listened to the video, some read only the slides, some directly did the exercises right after taking the pre-test, some took notes from the explanation, a few consulted other resources to complete the exercises or asked the classmates. The students participated in this online learning. It is true that there must be an internal negotiation within a learner to actively participate in the online learning and a social negotiation among the learners (Hrastinski, 2009). Students' active participation in online learning will improve their knowledge and skills, not mentioning a careful planning of the online module.

Last but not least, none of the students had technical difficulties how to operate the *writelogue* and how to open each section in the *writelogue* and do the tests and exercises as long as the internet network is smooth.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that most students have understood how to use reduced relative clauses even though there are some who still cannot use them correctly. It should be the teacher's attention to give them more practices until they are able to produce reduced relative clauses correctly in sentences. The online platform *writelogue* with its online course proves that the students get the benefits of it as it is technically easy to operate, the tutorial video and exercises are easy to understand, and the language contains mostly familiar words to the students. As a result, the students improve a lot in their ability to use reduced relative clauses.

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