

ABSTRACT

This study is about sentence complexity in compositions produced by first and fifth semester students English Department students. In this study the writer wanted to look for the answers to three problems about sentence complexity. The first problem was whether the sentences in the fifth semester students' compositions were more complex than the sentences in the first semester students' compositions, meaning that the sentences in the fifth semester students' compositions contained more complicated subordinate clauses than the sentences in the first semester students' compositions. The second problem was in what ways those sentences in the compositions were more complex. And the last problem was what factors made the fifth semester students able to make sentences that were more complex.

To answer the first problem the writer took data from writing assignments of Class Ib and Class Vc of the English Language Education Study Program of Sanata Dharma University. The number of the subjects was 62. They were required to write description within one hour. Then the writer counted the complexity of the sentences in the compositions using Cook's method that was by counting the Average Sentence Length, Average Block Length, and Average Clause Depth. It was found that the means of ASL, ABL and ACD of the fifth semester students were higher than those of the first semester students'. By using T-test it was proven that for the ASL and ACD those differences were significant, meaning that the sentences of the fifth semester students contained more complicated subordinate clauses.

For the second problem the writer counted the number of subordinate clauses and analysed some examples of the

sentences using s-bar syntax. The fifth semester students were able to use various types of clauses and they used more complex sentences in their compositions. The simple sentences were mostly found in the first semester students' compositions. The tree diagrams of the examples of the Fifth Semester students were more complicated because the fifth semester students often used more than one subordinate clause in a sentence. The use of more than one subordinate clause in a sentence caused the mean score of ASL, ABL, and ACD of the fifth semester students higher than those of the first semester students.

The writer constructed a questionnaire to answer the third problem. The questionnaire was about language exposure and its effects on the students' English. It was concluded that the factors that affected Semester Five students' ability to use more complicated sentences were the amount of exposure to English, the intensity of practising English and the duration of learning English. The fifth semester students had learned English longer, had more exposure to English and did more practice of English. Therefore, their ability to use complex sentences was better than the first semester students'.