THE USE OF ONLINE LESSONS TO ENHANCE ENGLISH WRITING ABILITY OF THAI UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Online learning has become a new trend of learning among a new generation of learners grown up with advanced information and communication technologies. Although a number of researchers have developed online learning for writing instruction, very few studies have paid attention to English sentence writing. This study aimed to examine whether the online lessons developed based on students' writing problems in English sentence writing and the needs of online lessons in the application of Vai and Sosulski's (2016) theoretical framework of online course design could enhance the writing ability of Thai undergraduate students. This study comprised three major phases: needs analysis, development of online lessons, and implementation of online lessons, employing a one-group pretest-posttest research design for the experiment with the participants of 24 students majoring in Business English. The responses from 140 Business English major students in the first phase of needs analysis revealed the students' various problems in sentence writing, such as their inability to write complex sentences, combine two independent clauses, and identify the difference between complete and incomplete sentences. After the final phase of implementing online lessons, the results indicated the effectiveness of the developed online lessons as evidenced in the increased percentage of correct sentences. In addition, although the percentages of simple sentences in the

writing pretest and posttest were not distinctively different, the increased percentage of adverb clauses demonstrated the students' attempt to write sentences using more complex syntactic structures.

Keywords: Needs Analysis, English Sentence Writing, Online Lessons, Conjunctions, Corpus Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Writing is regarded as the most difficult challenge, not only for language teachers but also for language learners. It is a compulsory skill for successful language development and is widely used for international communication (Sarwat et al., 2021). Not only does writing skill help learners become independent and creative in writing, but it also indicates learners' ability to put their thoughts in a meaningful form and represent themselves well on paper helps learners secure jobs in the future (Ariana, 2010).

In the technological era, since learners in the new generation commonly known as Net Gen have grown up with modern information and communication technologies, computer-based technology and online systems have been adopted to enhance learners' writing ability, particularly those at undergraduate levels, as evidenced in many studies. For example, Zhang and Chen (2021) used the model of blending platforms of online courses to develop learners' academic writing and presentation skills. Kawinkoonlasate (2021) examined the effectiveness of the e-Writing instructional design program using Google Site in developing the writing skills of EFL learners.

However, although a number of online courses have been developed for writing instruction, the use of online learning to improve sentence writing ability seems to have been neglected by many researchers. As claimed by Saddler and Preschern (2007), young writers begin their writing by creating sentences that convey complete thoughts and combining sentences into a paragraph and then into a short story. Worse, it is even more difficult for less-skilled writers since they tend to produce less syntactically complex sentences that contain more grammatical errors (p.6). Nevertheless, few pieces of research have been found to explore learners' sentence writing ability. For instance, Kılıçkaya and Krajka (2012) used a web-based comic strip creation tool to facilitate EFL learners' grammar and sentence

writing in Turkey. In addition, since it was difficult for Japanese people to write English sentences correctly, Kuzuhara et al. (2009) developed a cross-lingual English sentence retrieval system "EscortCross" which was a bilingual computerized dictionary to translate Japanese keywords into English.

In Thailand, although writing is placed as a compulsory subject in the curriculums of many educational institutions both at undergraduate and graduate levels, very few studies have explored the use of online learning to develop learners' writing ability. For example, Kawinkoonlasate (2021) used the e-Writing instructional design program to develop EFL learners' writing skills concerning essay writing. In terms of sentence writing, although research in sentence writing development has been found in a study by Tanjitanont (2011), it was the development based on computer-assisted instruction which was limited to institutional networks and accessibility by various devices. Accordingly, to fill the gap, this study aimed to develop online lessons to enhance the English sentence writing ability of Thai undergraduate students by employing Vai and Sosulski's (2016) theoretical framework of online course design. The developed online

lessons were expected to serve the learning habits of the Net Generation, or Digital Natives, allowing them to access online learning anytime with portable devices and immediate interaction between instructors and learners.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate Thai undergraduate students' problems in English sentence writing and their needs for online lessons to enhance their English sentence writing ability.

2. To explore how the online lessons based on students' problems in English sentence writing and needs for online lessons can be developed to enhance their English sentence writing ability.

3. To examine whether the online lessons can enhance the students' English sentence writing ability.

4. To analyze how the students' use of conjunctions and relative pronouns change after the implementation of online lessons.

5. To investigate the students' attitudes towards the use of online lessons.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Online Writing Courses

Apart from multiple writing instructional approaches, the development

of online lessons to develop learners' writing ability has drawn a great deal of attention from writing teachers and researchers. The primary emphasis of online writing courses in human studies was on the development of undergraduate academic writing ability. For example, as found in a study by Zhan and Chen (2021), a blended learning model supported by MOOC/SPOC, Zoom, and Canvas platforms was implemented to improve the academic writing and presentation skills of students from different majors, yielding positive attitudes towards the blended teaching after the implementation of the online course. Another online course intending to develop learners' academic writing ability was also discovered in Sabouni et al.' s (2017) study. Adopting the same model of the blended online course in academic writing, the researcher developed the writing ability of medical students in Syria with the online course advertised on social networking sites such as Facebook. Finally, online academic writing courses also played a role in teaching International English Language Testing System (IELTS) academic writing and exam strategies, as shown in a study by Narayanan and Mathew (2020). Designed based on needs analysis (NA) and diagnostic test (DT) results, the online writing course yielded good results for learners who engaged in self-study and autonomous learners.

In addition to the academic writing genre, which has been mostly chosen for online writing course development, the reviewed research has shown a remarkable notion that collaborative and asynchronous online course design was among the focuses of online course development. For example, Pittenger and Olson-Kellogg (2012) employed Web-based collaborative tools, PBworks™ and Google Sites™, as learning technologies to construct collaborative writing in an online pharmacotherapy course, which was later proved as a feasible and effective educational strategy. The asynchronous online workshop was also conducted by the library and the writing center at the University of South Alabama for students in a variety of majors as found in a research by Ard and Ard (2019). The study showed the positive outcome of students' improvements in scores among the 1,312 participants and their realization of the expectations of higher education.

2. Research on Improving Learners' Sentence Writing Ability

The researches on learners' improvement in sentence writing is twofold; one is central to the interlingual and

negative transfer of the EFL learners' first language, while the other focuses on improving the sentence writing ability of low-proficient learners. As displayed in a study by Afshunpour and Memari (2014), the researchers investigated whether Iranian university students majoring in English could utilize their knowledge of the first language in producing idiomatic expressions in sentence writing. Also found in Sun's (2013) study, the causes of negative transfer of Chinese sentence patterns on students' English writing were examined together with the differences between Chinese and English sentence patterns. TEH (2020) also employed contrastive Analysis (CA) of Mandarin Chinese and English as a pedagogic approach to promote the conceptualization of the English sentence patterns among Malaysian ESL learners.

In addition to the interlingual and negative transfer of the learners' first language, the research aiming to improve low-proficient learners' sentence writing ability also received considerable attention from a number of researchers. As evidenced in He's (2016) action research on improving non-English majors' problems in the basic English sentence patterns, the research showed its significant finding to improve

sentence writing ability of students who didn't pass CET-3 in a Vocational and Technical College in China. Goodrich et al. (2020) also examined correct adjective use when used with Spanish-speaking language-minority students with poor sentence construction skills. Finally, Pennington et al. (2018) examined the effects of response prompting strategies for teaching sentence writing to students with moderate intellectual disability.

METHODOLOGY

1. Participants

The participants of this study were 24 first-year Business English major students who enrolled in the English for Academic Development course in the second semester of the academic year 2019. The participants were selected by a non-random way of purposive sampling method, attaining a single group in the one-group pretest-posttest design.

2. Research Procedure

The research procedure of this study comprised three main stages including needs analysis, development of online lessons, and implementation of online lessons.
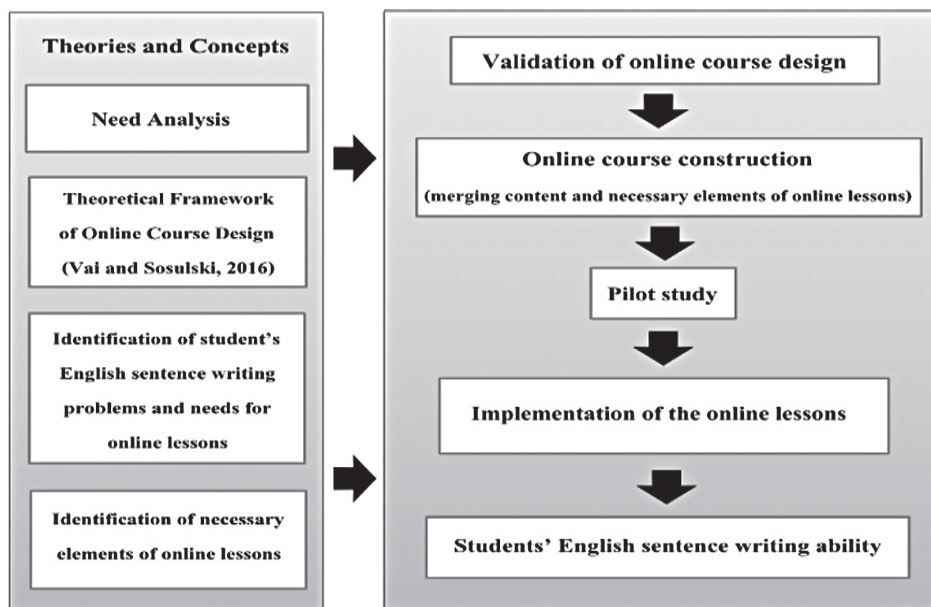
Figure 1: Research Procedure of the Study

2.1 Phase 1: Needs Analysis

2.1.1 Research Instruments

1) Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to investigate students' problems in English sentence writing and their needs for online lessons to enhance their sentence writing ability. There were three main parts in the questionnaire, including participants' demographic information, problems in English sentence writing, and their needs for online lessons to improve their writing ability.

2) Semi-structured Interview

In order to gather qualitative in-depth information of learners' English writing problems and their needs for online lessons, the students in each year from year 1 to year 4 were randomly selected for the interview to prevent the bias from cherry-picking.

2.1.2 Validation

In order to verify the content validity, both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were

validated by three experts in the field of English language teaching using item-objective congruence (IOC). The result of content validity revealed that both the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview were valid with an IOC score of 0.87 and 0.91, respectively. In addition, the questionnaire was tried out with a non-sample group of 30 students in order to find the reliability or internal consistency of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. The result revealed that the questionnaire was reliable with a reliable score of 0.869.

2.1.3 Data Collection

The questionnaires were distributed to 140 Business English major students from Year 1 to Year 4 in order to find their problems in English sentence writing and their needs for online lessons. Additionally, to find in-depth information, the researcher randomly selected four students from each year for the interview.

2.1.4 Data Analysis

The data obtained from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview was used to answer research question 1, concerning the students' problems in English sentence writing and their needs for online lessons. The researcher interpreted the data from the questionnaire and the interview concurrently and compared the findings from both data sources.

2.2 Phase 2: Development of Online Lessons

The development of the online lesson in Phase 2 was based on the data analysis in the previous phase of needs analysis. The online lessons were developed by applying Vai and Sosulski's (2016) theoretical framework of online course design which included three major elements of presentations of new knowledge, activities and resources, and assessment and feedback.

2.2.1 Research Instruments

1) Online Lessons

The researcher analyzed both quantitative and qualitativedata in the first phase of needs analysis and summarized the students' writing problems.

Then, the written transcript of the interview was submitted to an expert in English language teaching for intercoder agreement to find the salient themes of problems in English sentence writing and the needs for online lessons. In this regard, the researcher and the expert interpreted the data independently and then compared the salient themes of

problems in English sentence writing and the needs for online lessons. After that, the researcher studied the process of online course development and its necessary elements as proposed by Vai and Sosulski (2016) to design the online lessons based on the data from the first phase of needs analysis.

2.2.2 Validation

After the online lessons had been designed, the researcher submitted the online lesson plan and course structure including course objectives, course content, activities, course technology, and assessment to the three experts in English language teaching to verify the content validity. After validation, the results showed that all aspects of the online lessons were valid with an average score of 0.77.

2.3 Phase 3: Implementation of Online Lessons

This final phase of implementation of online lessons aimed to examine whether the online lessons could enhance learners' sentence writing ability.

2.3.1 Research Instruments

1) Online lessons

The online lessons contained five units based on the students' writing problems and the needs for online lessons, including parts of speech, simple

sentences, compound sentences, adjective clauses, and adverb clauses.

2) Multiple-Choice Pretest and Posttest

Multiple-choice pretest and posttest tests were developed to assess the students' writing ability. Both tests were similar and contained 50 items with 4 multiple choices covering five main content units of the online lessons including parts of speech, simple sentences, compound sentences, adjective clauses, and adverb clauses.

3) Writing Pretest and Posttest

Writing pretest and posttest were designed to examine whether the students could create more correct sentences and eliminate incorrect sentences in the forms of fragments and run-ons. The students were asked to write a paragraph describing their hometown in the pretest with the writing topic "My Hometown". In the posttest, the students were asked to write on the topic "The Place You Should Visit in My Hometown".

4) Evaluation Criteria for Sentence Writing

Evaluation criteria for sentence writing were specifically developed to evaluate the students' writing ability in

the use of four types of sentences: simple, compound, and complex sentences with adjective and adverb clauses. The sentences which were evaluated grammatically correct must correspond with the major elements and characteristics of particular types of sentences determined.

5) AntConc Corpus Software

AntConc is a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for linguistic analysis of text which includes a concordance, word, and keyword frequency generator. It was used to analyze the students' language features of the written sentences in the writing pretest and posttest. AntConc contains seven tools, but only two tools utilized by the researcher in this study were 'Word List' and 'Concordance' tools. The function of the 'Word List' shows the list of frequent and infrequent words used in the writing test and presents them in an ordered list, facilitating the researcher in finding the most frequent words from the corpora of writing pretest and posttest. In addition, the 'Concordance' tool which showed search results in a 'KWIC' (KeyWord In Context) format, helped the researcher to closely investigate the language features of the sentences containing conjunctions and relative pronouns with their collocates and the words nearby.

6) Attitude Questionnaire

The questionnaire aimed to survey the students' attitudes towards the use of online lessons. The participants were asked to rate their satisfaction after the use of online lessons using a five-point Likert scale.

7) Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interview was designed to gather the qualitative in-depth information of the students' attitudes towards the use of online lessons.

2.3.2 Validation

Online lessons, multiple-choice pretest and posttest, writing pretest and posttest, evaluation criteria for sentence writing, attitude questionnaire, and semi-structured interview were validated by three experts in English language teaching. The validation proved that all of the instruments were valid although some of the items in each of the research instruments needed amendment as suggested by the experts.

2.3.3 Pilot Study

All of the research instruments in this phase of course implementation

had been tried out with a group of 30 students who were in the same major as the participants. The reliability of the attitude questionnaire as well as the multiple-choice pre- and post-tests was demonstrated in the pilot study. Cronbach's alpha coefficient showed

that both research instruments were reliable, with the reliability coefficient of .869 and .893 respectively. Additionally, the pilot study showed the difficulty of each of the multiple-choice items, most of which were interpreted as appropriate, while those interpreted as too easy or too difficult were revised.

2.3.4 Data Collection

The data collection was implemented in a 15-week period divided into three main stages as follows:

Stage 1: Pretest Conduct

In the first week of the semester, the participants were asked to do the multiple-choice pretest which aimed to collect the data on their knowledge and understanding of English sentence structure. The time allocated for this multiple-choice pertest was 1 hour and 15 minutes. After that, they were asked to do a writing pretest for 120-140 words in 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Stage 2: Implementation of Online Lessons

In the first week, the students were taught how to access online lessons, contact channels, and all learning tasks and assignments centering on online learning activities. After that, the participants received a treatment of the developed online lessons carried out for 15 weeks.

Stage 3: Posttest Conduct, Attitude Survey, and Interview on the Use of Online Lessons

In week 15, the students were asked to do multiple-choice posttest, all 50 items of which were similar to those in the pretest, and then they did the writing posttest by writing a paragraph of 120-140 words within 1 hour and 30 minutes. After the posttest had been conducted, the students were asked to complete the questionnaire designed to survey their attitudes towards the use of online lessons, and four students were selected to participate in the interview on a voluntary basis.

2.3.5 Data Analysis

1) Multiple-choice pretest and posttest

Quantitatively, the scores derived from the pretest and posttest

were compared using a paired-sample t-test in order to examine the extent to which the participants had improved their writing ability.

2) Writing Pretest and Posttest

Quantitative data analysis was employed to investigate grammatically correct sentences. That is, the number of grammatically correct sentences was counted regardless of irrelevant mistakes such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Additionally, to prevent bias from the data analysis, inter-rater reliability was adopted. If the two raters gave different opinions towards the possible correct sentences, a discussion between the two raters was required until the final agreement was reached. After the investigation of the correct sentences had been completed, the number of correct sentences each student could achieve was compared with the number of incorrect sentences. The ratio of correct sentences to incorrect sentences found in each writing test was interpreted in percentage.

Qualitatively, content analysis was employed to explore the language features found in each writing test. AntConc was utilized with the function of 'Word List' to see the list of frequent occurrences of coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, and relative pronouns used in the writing tests presented in an ordered list. In addition, qualitatively, employing the 'Concordance' tool which showed search results in a 'KWIC' (Key Word In Context) format, the researcher could further extend the investigation by observing the language features of those connectors, such as their collocates and the groups of words or phrases appearing nearby.

3) Attitude Questionnaire and Semi-structured Interview

Attitudes toward the use of online lessons were interpreted by descriptive statistics including mean $\overline{X}$ and standard deviation (S.D.), and the interview data was concurrently compared with the quantitative findings in order to find a reliable conclusion and new findings.

RESULTS

1. Phase 1: Needs Analysis

Research Question 1: What are Thai undergraduate students' problems in English sentence writing and the needs for online lessons to enhance their English sentence writing ability?

Results from the survey revealed that the most difficult problem for the

students was "they didn't know how to write a complex sentence using adjective clause." ($\overline{X}$ = 4.654), followed by "I don't know how to connect two independent clauses." ($\overline{X}$ = 4.439). However, "I don't know how to use the correct punctuations." and "I don't know how to use pronoun reference." were found to be their two least problem

Table 1: Problems in English Sentence Writing

No.	Sentence Writing Problems	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	Meaning	Rank
1	I don't know the importance of parts of speech and their functions.	3.481	1.057	Moderate	6
2	I don't know how to write a simple sentence.	3.192	1.012	Moderate	8
3	I write incomplete sentences due to sentence fragments.	3.269	1.206	Moderate	7
4	I don't know how to use pronoun references.	2.769	1.215	Moderate	10
5	I don't know how to join two independent clauses using the correct conjunctions.	4.365	1.085	High	3
6	I don't know the differences between complete and incomplete sentences.	4.135	1.121	High	4
7	I don't know how to connect two independent clauses.	4.439	1.220	High	2
8	I don't know how to use the correct punctuations.	2.846	1.144	Moderate	9
9	I don't know how to write a complex sentence using an adjective clause.	4.654	.947	Very High	1
10	I don't know how to write a complex sentence using an adverb clause.	3.958	1.037	High	5
	Total	3.711	.795	High	

In terms of needs, it is obvious that their needs in online lessons were rated at a high level with a mean score of 4.188. When considering each item, the item "The online lessons should be accessed any time users want to use them." was ranked first with a mean score of 4.481. Following this, the students expressed their needs for the types of exercises demanding that the online lessons should provide various types of exercises ($\overline{X}$ = 4.462).

The quantitative data of students' problems in sentence writing and the needs for online lessons corresponded with the qualitative data obtained from the interview as expressed by student 4 that their inability to write the correct sentences was found to be their great concern as shown in the excerpts below.

Student 4: "If I knew where to place each word in the sentence, I would be able to write better."

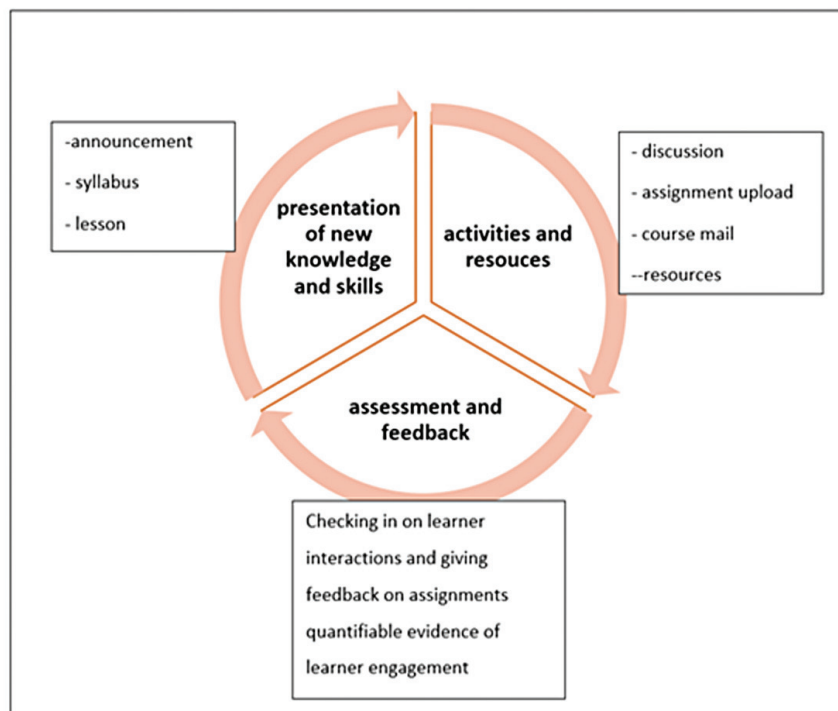According to their needs for online lessons, the participants said that the content should be simple and concise, starting with content followed by self-practice learners could access and do the exercises repeatedly as seen in the following interview excerpts:

Student 1: "The online lessons should start with the content, then text completion, and finally the exercise that gives learners to practice writing sentences."

2. Phase 2: Development of Online Lessons

Research Question 2: How can the online lessons based on students' problems in English sentence writing and needs of online lessons be developed to enhance their English sentence writing ability?

After the online lessons had been proved valid, the researcher constructed the online lessons by applying Vai and Sosulski's (2016) theoretical framework of online course design as seen in Figure 2

Figure 2: Model of Asynchronous and Dynamic and Online Course Applied
from Vai and Sosulski (2016)

In order to construct the online lessons following the model of asynchronous and dynamic online course above, the researcher selected "Google Sites" to design the online lessons due to its characteristics of user-friendliness, compatibility with other Google services, free of charge, and privacy. Then, the researcher created the online lessons following the three components of online course design proposed by Vai and Sosulski (2016), including 1) 'presentation of new knowledge and skills' in which the researcher could announce the important

updates and post the course syllabus and the lesson plans to the class, 2) 'activities and resources' which the researcher used to promote the class discussion, provide a contact channel, and upload the learning resources and materials, and 3) 'assessment and feedback' which was utilized to give feedback to the students' assignments and observe the students' progress and quantifiable engagement and participation. After the online lessons had been developed, they were brought to pilot with 30 students who were not the

participants but were in the same major. During the pilot study, the researcher observed the use of online lessons by the pilot group to improve the online lessons before implementation in the next stage. The observed data showed that the students could understand the teacher's announcement, course syllabus, and lesson plans posted on the website. Also, they had no problems accessing the online lessons since they had appropriate devices with internet connections. However, some of the students reflected that it was sometimes difficult to find the comment menu in

"DISQUS" when they wanted to contact their peers and the teacher. To improve the efficiency of the online lessons, all of the data collected from observation and students' feedback were revised by the researcher before the next phase of course implementation.

3. Phase 3: Implementation of Online Lessons

Research Question 3: Can the developed online lessons enhance the students' English sentence writing ability?

3.1 Multiple-Choice Pretest and Posttest

Table 2: Students' Multiple-choice Pretest and Posttests Scores

Pre-test		Post-test		t	p
$\overline{X}$	S.D.	$\overline{X}$	S.D.		
22.000	5.898	25.958	7.274	-4.419	.000

Table 2 shows the students' improvement in English sentence writing ability. As can be seen, the mean score of the posttest was higher than that of the pretest, and the paired sample t-test indicated that the pretest score and the posttest scores were statistically different at the significant level of .05 (t = -4.419, p = .000), indicating the improvement of the students' English sentence writing ability after the implementation of the online lessons.

3.2 Writing Pretest and Posttest

Table 3 signifies the effectiveness of the online lessons with the increased percentage of correct sentences and the decreased percentage of incorrect sentences. The 24 writing pretests written by the 24 participants comprised 366 sentences divided into 196 correct sentences (53.55%) and 170 incorrect sentences (46.45%). For the writing posttests, the total number of 263 sentences was divided into 154 correct sentences (58.56%) and 109 incorrect sentences (41.44%).

Research Question 4: How does the students' use of conjunctions and relative pronouns change after the implementation of online lessons?

Table 3: Number and Percentage of Correct and Incorrect Sentences

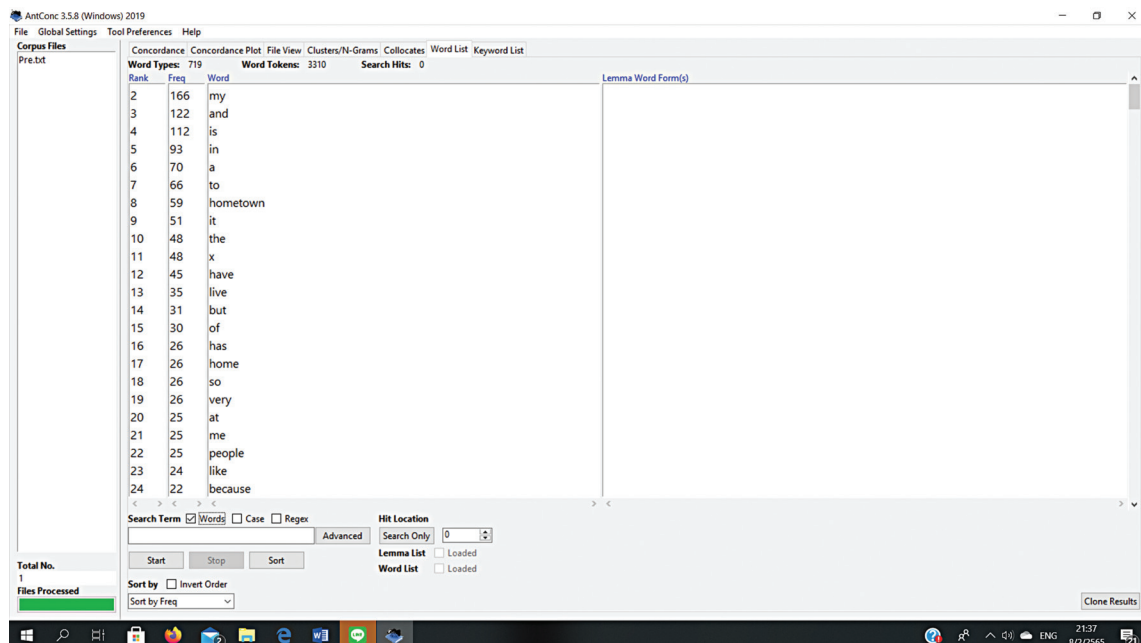| Assessment	Number and Percentage of Correct Sentences				Total	Number and Percentage of Incorrect Sentences		Total
	simple	compound	Adj clause	Adv clause		fragment	run-on	
Pretest	110 (30.05%)	32 (8.74%)	7 (1.91%)	47 (12.85%)	196 (53.55%)	67 (18.31%)	103 (28.14%)	170 (46.45%)
Posttest	78 (29.66%)	13 (4.94%)	22 (8.37%)	41 (15.59%)	154 (58.56%)	45 (17.11%)	64 (24.33%)	109 (41.44%)

Figure 3: Top Word List in the Corpora of Students' Writing Pretests

As seen in Figure 3, the function of the wordlist expressed the significant findings that, among the total number of 3310 words in the corpora of all 24 pieces of writing pretests, the conjunction that was used the most was "and", followed by "but", "so", and "because", which were used for 122, 31, 26, and 22 times respectively. Furthermore, the other types of subordinating conjunctions found in the corpora were "when" (22), "if" (8), "although" (2), "why" (2), and "until" (1). For relative pronouns, it was found that "that", "which", and "who" were the top three types of relative pronouns found in the pretests for 12, 3, and 2 times, respectively.
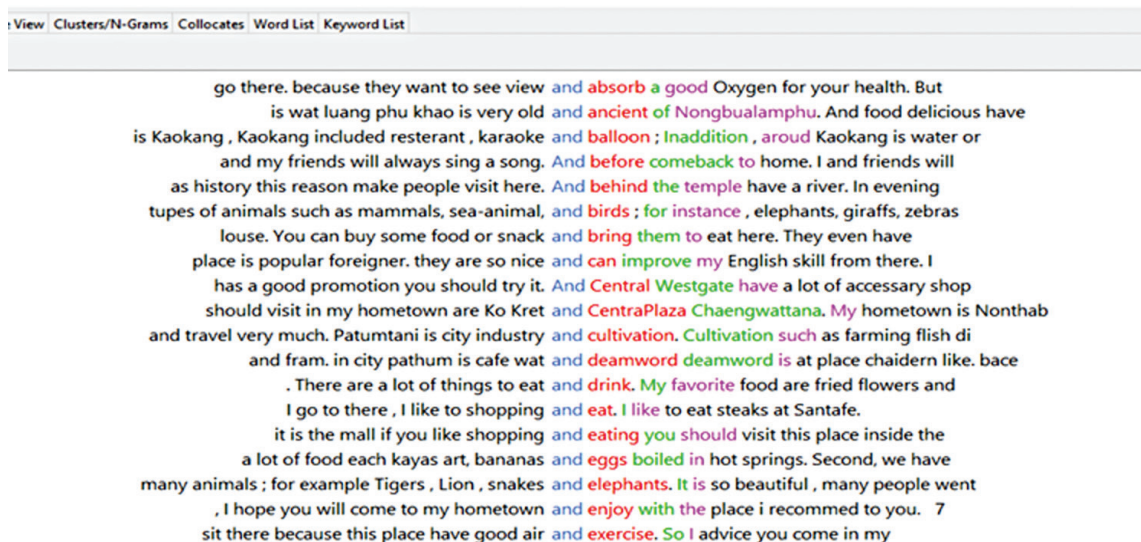
In comparison, in the posttest writing, it was revealed that, of all 2987 words in the corpora, the conjunction that was used the most was still "and" (101), followed by "so" (26), and "because" (23). Additionally, "that" (16) was still the most frequently used relative pronoun. For subordinating conjunctions, compared to the corpora of pretests where "because" and "when" were the two subordinating conjunctions that were most frequently found for 22 and 18 times, respectively, the corpora of posttests showed that "because"

(23) and "if" (14) were mostly used in the students' posttest writing.

Significantly, the concordance lines revealed that, similar to the pretest, the coordinating conjunction "and" was the most frequently used conjunction to combine words or phrases instead of sentence combination, as displayed in the sample screenshot of the posttest analysis of the conjunction "and" in the concordance lines below.

Research Question 5: What are the students' attitudes towards the use of online lessons?

Figure 4: Posttest Analysis of the Conjunction "and" in the Concordance Line

Table 4: Content and Presentation of the Online Lessons

No.	Statement	$\overline{X}$	S.D.	Meaning	Rank
1	The content and objectives of each unit are related.	4.542	.588	Very High	1
2	The content of the online lessons is interesting.	4.310	.779	High	2
3	The online lessons are easy to use.	3.750	1.056	High	5
4	The content of each unit is well arranged and has a good organization.	4.300	.897	High	3
5	The use and difficulty of language in the online lessons are appropriate.	3.442	.833	Moderate	8
6	The difficulty of the exercises in the online lessons is appropriate.	3.417	.776	Moderate	9
7	The online lessons are enjoyable.	4.167	.868	High	4
8	The online lessons make me feel more confident for further self-learning.	3.625	.885	High	6
9	Overall, I am satisfied with learning through the online lessons.	3.543	.834	High	7
	Total	3.899	.513	High	

The results from the attitude questionnaire and semi-structured interview revealed the students' satisfaction towards the use of online lessons. According to Table 4, it was found that the students' satisfaction towards the content and presentation of the online lessons was high ($\overline{X}$ = 3.899) wherein the relation between content and objectives was ranked first ($\overline{X}$ =4.542), followed by the interesting content of the online lessons ($\overline{X}$ = 4.310).

Additionally, in terms of the students' perceptions of their improvement in writing ability after the use of online lessons, the students expressed that the online lessons could help them understand

and write more correct English sentences ($\overline{X}$ = 4.417), followed by their ability to write simple sentences ($\overline{X}$ = 4.355), and their confidence in writing better English paragraphs ($\overline{X}$ =4.060), which were ranked second and third, respectively.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that the online lessons developed based on the students' writing problems and the needs for online lessons could develop their sentence writing ability. However, the fact that the pretest and the posttest scores were not distinctively different might result from the huge difference in the students' writing ability. It should be noted that many students gained lower than a half of the total score on the posttest and a number of the students showed their improvement after the treatment of online lessons, resulting in slight difference between the pretest and posttest scores.

Nevertheless, the fact that the pretest and posttest scores were significantly different could indicate the positive outcome of the developed online lessons. Through the active and collaborative learning activities of the designed online lessons where the students could easily access all of the learning resources and materials and receive instant feedback with their portable devices, the low-proficient learners and the group of students with very different writing abilities and from different backgrounds could learn collaboratively, leading to the positive learning outcome as evidenced in the results of the study. Accordingly, the online course design of this current study could be used as a guideline for teachers and researchers in many subject areas to create the online lessons with ease and free of charge but more effectively, particularly in the seemingly unending period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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