SENTENCE COMBINING AND THE TEACHING OF WRITING IN THE ESL/FL CLASSROOM: THEORY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE*

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Abstract

Over the past ten years, sentence combining has become a standard fixture in native speaker high school and university writing programs. Its popularity is evidenced by the enormous number of research studies, scholarly articles in academic journals and classroom textbooks specifically devoted to its use. This paper provides an overview of the theory, research and practice of sentence combining and its application to college level writing programs for ESL/FL students.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the early 60's, as more and more studies began questioning the pedagogical value of teaching formal and structural grammar in relation to writing, educators sought alternate methods for teaching grammar in the composition classroom

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(see, e.g., Braddock et al. 1963 and Zamel 1976). With the advent of the "Chomskian Revolution" in linguistics, a number of research studies appeared claiming that transformational grammar had been successfully used as a method of instruction in elementary school writing programs (Bateman and Zidonis 1966; Mellon 1969). A further refinement of these earlier studies came when O'Hare (1973) discovered that greater overall syntactic proficiency could be achieved by dispensing with the formal instruction of transformational grammar and instead employing cued or signalled pattern drills in conjunction with sentences that had been reduced to their 'kernel' or deep structure form:

   A. SOMETHING is illogical.

     Man believes SOMETHING. (IT-FOR-TO)

     Only this tiny earth possesses the conditions. (THAT)

     The conditions have made life possible. (WHICH/THAT)

   B. It is illogical for man to believe that only this tiny earth possesses the conditions which have made life possible

   (p. 86).[1]

The theoretical rationale behind sentence combining is that it allows a student the opportunity to manipulate syntax without having to contend with some of the other creative aspects involved in the composing process. In other words, the cognitive load is being decreased in order to emphasise one specific skill essential to learning how to write in either a first or second language. Some proponents of sentence combining argue that this can facilitate the production of sentences to such an extent that it frees up mental energy for other aspects of the composing process. Stotsky (1975), in her comprehensive review of the literature on sentence combining, suggests then when she writes:

   . . . .the practice of playing mentally and operationally with syntactic structures leads to a kind of automatization of syntactic skills such that mental energy is freed in a Brunnerian sense to concentrate on greater elaboration

of intention and meaning. (p. 37)

A further attraction of sentence combining that both O'Hare (1973) and Ney (1981) have pointed out is that it necessitates the actual 'chunking' of language. As a student learns to embed an increasing number of kernel sentences, the ability to recall and decode more complex information grows correspondingly. This ability to chunk information is also extremely important when a second language learner is developing both reading and listening skills. A number of recent studies have reported that sentence combining practice helped improve these two related language skills in addition to developing greater syntactic maturity in writing (Straw and Schreiner 1982). Other researchers have accounted for this by making an even bolder claim that sentence combining may actually accelerate cognitive growth and thus have a positive effect on all areas of language learning (Hunt 1970/ 1977; Suhor 1978; Ney 1980b).

One of the most important theoretical assumptions underlying sentence combining is that a student can "test his answers against his own sense of grammaticality" (O'Hare 1973). For a native speaker, of course, this is possible; however, for a non-native speaker of English, sentence combining practice must be gaged to the students' level of competence. As Vivian Zamel (1980) has observed, an ESL/FL student may not possess the linguistic repertoire or "key concepts relating to the grammar of the sentence" to benefit from sentence combining practice. She goes on to advocate the use of traditional grammar instruction so as to provide a conceptual framework within which students may analyze and discuss the different sentences they create when doing these exercises. While this may be necessary for lower level learners (see, e.g., Terdy 1980), intermediate and advanced ESL/FL students usually enter college level writing classes with many years of formal grammar instruction already behind them. Examination of the extent of grammar instruc-

tion in foreign countries where English is taught as a second language and related scores on standard ESL proficiency tests indicate that the vast majority of these students do not need to learn more 'back-to-basics' grammatical nomenclature, but rather how to intuitively employ the grammar they have previously studied when faced with the task of writing in a second language (Farhady 1982). And this is why sentence combining can be such a productive method of instruction in an ESL/FL writing program.

RESEARCH ON SENTENCE COMBINING
IN ESL/FL INSTRUCTION

Although there is still substantial debate over whether sentence combining improves overall writing quality and in turn, how this can be quantitatively evaluated, there is now at least some agreement among researchers and teachers that sentence combining does have a positive effect on students' writing. Numerous studies, including those by Mellon (1969), O'Hare (1973), Combs (1976), and Daiker, Morenburg and Kerek (1978), have provided a sound theoretical basis for the application of sentence combining practice in the composition classroom. In contrast with these studies which specifically dealt with native English speakers, the research on the use of sentence combining in the ESL/FL classroom is surprisingly limited. With the exception of earlier studies by Crymes (1971), Akin (1975), Cooper (1976), Klassen (1976), and Monroe (1968) which all reported positive results from sentence combining practice in ESL/FL high school and college writing courses, there are only two major studies which have explored the effects of sentence combining on the writing of ESL or foreign language students.[2]

The first of these by Cooper, Morain and Kalivoda (1978/

1980), reported on an experimental sentence combining program involving 325 American foreign language students studying French, German and Spanish at the University of Georgia. The experimental groups in all three language classes used sentence combining exercises in addition to the regular course work while the control groups engaged in a variety of activities designed to develop all four language skills. The experimental groups which practiced sentence combining showed "significantly higher increases" than the control groups in all three syntactic maturity factors of *Words per Clause, Clauses per T-Unit*, and *Words per T-Unit* when the pre-test and post-test writing samples were compared across all three language courses.[3] The researchers also reported that the post-test scores for each language group remained constant, although students studying German showed slightly higher increases for all three syntactic maturity factors when compared with the scores from the other language classes (French and Spanish).

In an attempt to assess the overall quality of compositions from both the experimental and control groups studying German, nine instructors were asked to evaluate a selection of compositions written on identical themes. An overall mark out of 100 was assigned on the basis of 25% for grammatical and syntactic proficiency and 75% for style which included sentence structure, organization, imagination and word choice. On the basis of these indices of evaluation, 81% of the experimental groups' compositions were chosen as being qualitatively superior to the control groups' compositions. However, no correlation was made between the syntactic maturity scores and the rater preferences. Moreover, compositions from the French and German classes were not subject to this kind of evaluation. Thus, as the researchers themselves concluded, "the relationship between qualitative and quantitative aspects of student writing was investigated

to a limited degree" (Cooper 1981:162).

One of the most interesting findings of this study was that a correlation between increased syntactic maturity in writing and speaking was observed in the experimental groups across all three languages studied, whereas the control groups showed much less improvement when oral pre-test and post-test samples were compared (taped LL exercises were used as a basis for evaluation). As was pointed out earlier, other studies have found a similar correlation between greater syntactic maturity in writing and improved reading and listening skills as a result of sentence combining practice. Although there is obviously a transfer of such inter-related skills, regardless of what method of instruction is used in the classroom, it would seem that sentence combining may facilitate an even greater transfer of both productive and receptive skills. However, much more research is required in this area before any definitive conclusions can be drawn.

A second major study by Ney and Fillerup (1980) partially confirmed Cooper's et al. results, but differed in a number of its findings. The experimental and control groups consisted of 24 ESL students in an 8-week freshman English course at Arizona State University. The experimental group was given sentence combining exercises in addition to the regular course work covered by the control group. The control group's syllabus consisted of a wide variety of activities including free writing, the study of English paragraph structure and formal analysis of rhetorical devices. Even though the experimental group practiced sentence combining for only 10 hours out of the total classroom time (homework assignments were included), Ney and Fillerup found a "statistically significant improvement in their writing" compared to the control group, which showed a decrement in their scores in all three factors of syntactic maturity. In contrast to Ney's (1976) earlier study of an experimental sentence combining program with native speaker college freshmen

where he found that sentence combining had a negligible effect, this study suggested that the age/grade/ syntactic competence hypothesis contested by Daiker, Morenburg and Kerek (1978) was in fact confirmed. Daiker et al. argued that Ney had devoted insufficient classroom time for sentence combining practice to expect significant results while Ney contended that the failure of the study could be accounted for by the higher syntactic competence of the experimental and control groups:

> . . . .the most plausible explanation for the difference in the results of the two studies is that the subjects in the 1976 study were native speakers of English and hence, had a higher level of syntactic competence at the outset and did not progress from this level while the subjects in this study had a relatively low level of competence in English and hence progressed quite considerably in their command of English structures. (1980:20)

Unlike Cooper's et al. study, however, Ney and Fillerup reported that when compositions written on identical themes by both the experimental and control groups were evaluated by three different instructors, the control group's compositions were found to be of better overall quality on the basis of the organization, content and the variety of rhetorical devices used. This finding supports the position taken by numerous sentence combining critics such as Christensen (1968), Moffett (1968), Marzano (1976), Zamel (1980), and Crowhurst (1982), that sentence combining may be beneficial if accompanied by instruction on other aspects of the composing process. This seems to be especially true in relation to teaching composition in the ESL/FL classroom where students not only face the difficult task of mastering the syntax of a second language but also the equally difficult challenge of writing under the constraints of culturally determined patterns of discourse and rhetorical organization which may differ radically from their native languages

(Kaplan 1972).[4] Thus, the ESL/FL teacher must employ sentence combining as part of an overall curriculum where various methods of instruction are used. William Strong (1976) has also argued for a similar kind of eclectic approach and puts this debate in its proper perspective when he writes:

The most appropriate context for sentence combining is as a skill-building adjunct to regular composition work. In no sense, then, is sentence combining a comprehensive writing program in and of itself. It can be a part of a well-articulated program, but common sense suggests that it can't be the one and only instructional strategy. . . . The strategy is not an end in itself. It's a means to an end. And the end is increased linguistic flexibility and increased independence in free writing. (p. 61)

In comparing these two studies, a number of methodological questions arise which pertain to the research on sentence combining in general. Cooper's et al. findings seem much more acceptable simply because of the comparative size of the study and the greater number of writing samples that were evaluated. Furthermore, the teacher variable in Cooper's et al. study was much more closely monitored since more instructors were involved and each taught a control and experimental class. Differences in teaching styles and lack of consistency in evaluation are two variables that have to be taken into consideration when conducting and analyzing research on sentence combining. The latter is especially important when judging overall writing quality. This is the main reason why T-Unit analysis, despite its inherent drawbacks, remains as one of the criteria for evaluating writing.[5]

PRACTICAL APPLICATION
IN THE ESL/FL CLASSROOM

Sentence combining exercises should progress from simpler signalled drills to more open exercises without signalling.

These signalled drills, or what Kameen (1978) has called 'mechanical exercises,' can be used in the first few classes to introduce students to the general procedure of sentence combining. In these introductory exercises it is advisable to restrict the possible combinations of kernel sentences to a single answer:

> COMBINE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES INTO ONE SENTENCE:
> 1. Mary always makes herself a delicious dinner. (AND)
> 2. She finishes it with a tasty coffee. (BUT)
> 3. She never cooks anything for her husband.
> A._____

These simple exercises are designed to build up student confidence and prepare them for more difficult exercises. This second type of exercise should be less controlled, have fewer signals and allow for a greater variety of combinations. In order to ensure that students understand the rhetorical options available for expressing a specific idea, they should be encouraged to discover as many combinations as possible rather than seeking out only one correct answer. To facilitate this process, students can work in small groups with individuals orally reading their answers and then, discussing the various ways to combine the sentences to achieve different stylistic effects (first or second language may be used depending on the teaching environment and level of the students). For most ESL/FL students, the selection of one possible combination over another is an extremely difficult task, at least at the initial stages of doing sentence combining. However, as students begin to employ a greater number of grammatical structures, they will also increasingly rely on their intuitive rather than conscious decision-making abilities. As most writers will testify, it is this latter element that is so

important to the kind of internal dialogue that eventually transpires during the actual composing process. A greater number of kernel sentences can be presented at this point to demonstrate the importance of context as a criterion for selecting an appropriate sentence:

COMBINE THE FOLLOWING SENTENCES IN AS MANY DIFFERENT WAYS AS POSSIBLE:
1. The ferry pushed on.
2. It went towards the island.
3. The name of the island is Hornby.
4. It went through the waters.
5. The waters were rough.
6. The boat did SOMETHING.
7. It went up and down.
8. It went up and down again.
9. It did this as it moved.
10. The moving was across the waters.

A. The ferry pushed on through the rough waters . . . .
B. Pushing on through the rough waters, the ferry went. . .
C. The ferry, pushing on through the rough waters, went. .

Once students have learned to manipulate a variety of grammatical structures, longer passages of whole discourse can be introduced. These exercises present the student with even greater options for combining or even writing out entire paragraphs. At this stage, students should be working well beyond the sentence level by recombining, reorganizing and revising the sentences into a finished paragraph or composition without the aid of signals. Well-known literary works (see, e.g., Stulls [1983] new textbook), magazine articles or even student compositions can either be reduced to kernel sentences or students can do this themselves by breaking down and analyzing a piece of writing. Once again, students

may discuss the possible ways they can organize, combine or even delete sentences to achieve the best stylistic effect.[6] With students working in groups, the teacher can circulate around the classroom counselling groups on questions they may have with their assignments. To ensure the maximum use of classroom time, students should be assigned exercises for homework prior to the next class meeting.

.The actual amount of time devoted to sentence combining practice in the classroom should be left to the instructor's own discretion. Usually with these longer and more complex exercises, one exercise is more than enough material for one class meeting. By the time students have discussed their answers and perhaps even written them on the blackboard (overhead projector can also be used), 20 to 30 minutes will have expired. Both Daiker's et al. (1982) and William Strong's (1973) sentence combining textbooks primarily employ these kinds of exercises:

COMBINE AND ORGANIZE THE FOLLOWING INTO A SHORT STORY:

1. The singer was young.
2. He stepped into the spotlight.
3. The singer was swarthy.
4. The spotlight was red.
5. His shirt was unbuttoned.
6. The unbuttoning barred his chest.
7. Sounds ballooned around him.
8. The sounds were of guitars.
9. The sounds were of drums.
10. The sounds were of girls.
11. The girls were screaming.
12. . . . . etc. (Strong 1973:40)

VARIATION A: The swarthy young singer stepped into the red spotlight with his unbuttoned shirt barring his chest. The sounds of guitars, drums and screaming girls ballooned around him. . . . . etc.

VARIATION B: Stepping into the red spotlight, the swarthy young singer . . . . etc.

VARIATION C: As the sounds of guitars, drums and screaming girls ballooned around him, the swarthy young singer . . . . etc.

CLASSROOM MATERIALS:
DESIGNING SENTENCE COMBINING EXERCISES
FOR THE ESL/FL CLASSROOM

Because of the complexity of the vocabulary and dense cultural content found in many of the currently available sentence combining textbooks, an instructor must either simplify these native speaker materials (Strong; Daiker et al.; Stull; op. cit.) by providing a lower level of vocabulary, or write entirely new sentence combining exercises that assume a level of competence appropriate for ESL/FL students. Another option, of course, would be to use one of the three ESL/FL sentence combining textbooks (Gallingane and Byrd 1977/1979; Pack and Henrichsen 1980; Bander 1982). However, assuming that instructors may want to design their own materials, an important question arises on the most effective way of sequencing grammatical structures for a sentence combining program.

Cooper (1973), Davidson (1977), Kleen (1980), Smith (1981) and Lawlor (1981) have provided specifications for sequencing sentence combining exercises on the basis of developmental and child language acquisition studies (see,

e.g., Hunt 1965; O'Donnell 1967; Brown 1975). The overall rationale for sequencing grammatical instruction has been based on the assumption that syntactic maturity may be accelerated if sentence combining exercises were patterned to follow the natural sequence in which grammatical structures are acquired by a native speaker. Since recent studies on second language acquisition have pointed out that first and second language learners resort to similar strategies when acquiring a language, this rationale for sequencing sentence combining exercises seems to be theoretically sound (Ervin-Tripp 1974; Dulay, Burt and Krashen 1982). However, the practical application of this to the ESL/FL classroom is somewhat more difficult because of the varying levels of student competence in one class/group. Krashen (1981), for example, has opposed the adoption of a grammatically sequenced syllabi for just this reason. Instead, he suggests that second language learners need to be challenged by the materials they study in order for 'acquisition' to occur as opposed to passive 'learning.' Krashen's model of i+1 sequencing (previously acquired [i] and additional structure/content [+1]) would mean that a grammatical structure could be introduced even though a learner may not have the requisite competence to immediately identify the rules that generated a new surface structure. In the case of a sentence combining problem where the relative pronoun is deleted, according to Krashen's model of sequencing, a student should be able to infer the deletion rule through sentence combining problems involving the same transformation (signalling may be used to generate a more complex grammatical form which might otherwise be ignored, e.g., *Hint: Don't use who/which*).

A second criterion which Lawlor (1981) has used for sequencing sentence combining exercises is the derivational complexity (DTC) of a grammatical structure. In generative grammar (TG), a grammatical structure is derived from an

underlying or deep structure by a series of transformations. The relative clause is derivationally simpler than a prenominal adjective because the latter is in fact derived from the former (two additional transformations are required to arrive at the surface structure of a prenominal adjective from a relative construction). In TG theory, an acquisition hierarchy can be: determined by comparing the derivational complexity of all grammatical structures within any given language (e.g., the greater the number of transformations involved in arriving at a specific grammatical form, the more difficult the acquisition process). However, by adopting a grammatical syllabus on the basis of DTC, grammatical structures that have been reported in both first and second language acquisition studies as being acquired comparatively late would be introduced prior to structures that have been reported to be mastered relatively early in the acquisition process. Lawlor, for example, introduces the relative clause in his sentence combining materials long before the prenominal adjective, but on the basis of acquisition studies, the prenominal adjective is mastered much sooner than the relative clause (Bowerman 1979). The validity of sequencing a grammatical syllabus solely on the basis of DTC seems to be highly doubtful in light of these findings (see, e.g., Fodor, Beaver and Garrett 1974).

A more practical alternative for sequencing sentence combining exercises is perhaps best arrived at by working from both Davidson's (1976) index of the most frequently used grammatical structures in college level compositions and an approximate order of sequencing based on the language acquisition literature. To these two criteria we add a third: our own experience of writing and using sentence combining exercises in the ESL/FL classroom, while also having observed the difficulties students have with specific structures. A suggested order of sequencing sentence combining exercises, commencing from simpler to progressively more com-

plex structures, is given below:

Group 1
a) Coordinating Connectives (and, but, so, for, or, etc.)
b) Prenominal Adjectives (the red car; the rich creamy coffee)
c) Adverbs (the man slowly ran to. . .; the man ran slowly to
   . . ., etc.)

Group 2
a) Prepositional Phrases (with, in, on, at, over, etc.)
b) Relative Clauses (that, which, when, where, who, whom)
c) Subordinate Clauses (if, when, while, because, although,
   since, as, etc.)

Group 3
a) Participial Phrases (Walking out of the restaurant, Peter
   left a half-eaten hamburger on the table.)
b) Appositives and Adjective Phrases (John, a good friend of
   mine, . . . etc.)
c) Absolute Phrases (I sat motionless, looking around the
   room, . . . etc.)

Group 4
a) Infinitive Phrases (The emperor's dream was to build a
   wall . . . etc.)
b) Gerund Phrases (Studying for exams is never enjoyable
   . . . etc.)
c) Noun Clauses (What made our decision difficult was the
   . . . etc.)

When writing sentence combining exercises, usually three or four grammatical structures can be covered in one unit. Grammatical explanations should be brief and the exercises should move well beyond combining two or three sentences as soon as possible. If sentence combining exercises remain

only as highly controlled grammar drills where a student is not forced to develop other important composing skills such as revision, deletion and manipulation of entire paragraphs, then its pedagogical value is diminished. In fact, what distinguishes sentence combining from most other forms of grammar instruction, whether they be sentence imitation, cloze exercises or error correction, is that when longer passages of discourse are used, sentence combining practice at least partially replicates (by no means completely) the actual use of grammar during the composing process. With the current interest in the composing process of both native speaker and second language students (see, e.g., Zamel 1982), sentence combining is being increasingly employed as one of the many methods for teaching process skills (W. Smith 1981).

Unfortunately, the currently available sentence combining textbooks for ESL/FL instruction are much too controlled, while also lacking imaginative content. Bander's (1982) new text offers only a few unsignalled exercises and these are restricted to 10 or 12 kernel sentences at the most. The majority of the text is filled with very short combining exercises and accompanied by elaborate grammatical explanations, many of which seem to fill space rather than clarify the grammatical rules being discussed. Pack and Henrichsen's (1980) textbook can be recommended for the variety of exercises presented, however, the content is often dry, providing little incentive for the students to do the exercises. A smaller two-part text (Books 1 & 2) by Gallingane and Byrd (1977, 1979) is perhaps the most interesting from the point of view of providing meaningful content, although the exercises are not developed beyond the paragraph level. William Strong's (1973) text still remains the 'sumum bonum' of sentence combining materials. Since it was written for a native speaker audience, it is difficult to use except with more advanced students, but there are some exercises that can be adapted for intermediate level students if a

vocabulary list is provided by the instructor (see Davidson [1977] for suggestions on using this text).

Prior to beginning a course using sentence combining exercises, a short pre-test should be given to establish what grammatical structures require more study. The pre-test can consist of a short story that has been reduced to kernel sentences. Students should be asked to rewrite the story by combining as many kernels as possible. An alternate method would be to assign a short composition in class and then identify problem areas that require special concentration (see Angelis [1975] for more details on this method). Similarly, at the end of the course, a post-test should be given and the results compared with the pre-test in order to ascertain the syntactic proficiency that has been achieved.

NOTES

1. Paradoxically, sentence combining has only recently been introduced into the foreign language classroom even though the actual concept of using cued or signalled grammatical exercises was originally borrowed from audio-lingual methods commonly used in foreign language instruction during the 60's and 70's. See O'Hare (1973) and Ney (1966/1980b) for an historical account of sentence combining.

2. Other studies by Perron (1974), Hunt (1978) and Kaike (1978) have not been included because these studies were more concerned with developmental acquisition of grammatical structures rather than the effects of sentence combining on writing quality.

3. The minimal terminable unit (T-Unit) was first used by Hunt (1965) to diachronically measure the developmental progression in which children acquire specific grammatical structures. A T-Unit is defined as one main clause *plus* any subordinate clause or non-clausal structure attached to or embeddded in a main clause. Other measures that have been used to analyze syntactic complexity are: sentence

length, clause length, ratio of subordinate clauses to total number of words, etc. The three measures of *Words per Clause, Clauses per T-Unit*, and *Words per T-Unit* are the three primary indices used to objectively evaluate writing quality. The following writing sample, taken from Cooper's et al. (1980) study, illustrates the method of calculating syntactic complexity on the basis of the above mentioned indices. Slashes indicate T-Units and underlined portions indicate clauses:

> Even an American may be confused by the number of knives, forks, and spoons beside his plate *when he sits down to a formal dinner*. / It is simple, however: / one should use the utensils in the order *in which they lie*, beginning from the outside; / or one can watch the hostess and do *what she does*. /

This paragraph contains 56 words, 2 sentences, 4 T-Units and 3 subordinate clauses. The three factors of syntactic maturity can be calculated in the following way:

1. *Words per Clause*: total number of words ÷ by total number of clauses, both subordinate and main (56 ÷ 7 = 8.00 wd./cl.).

2. *Clauses per T-Unit*: total number of clauses, both subordinate and main ÷ number of T-Units (7 ÷ 4 = 1.75 cl./T-Unit).

3. *Words per T-Unit*: Words in writing sample (composition) ÷ T-Units in a writing sample (composition) (56 ÷ 4 = 14.00 wd./ T-Unit).

When using T-Unit analysis for evaluating the writing quality of ESL/FL compositions, garbles/errors must be accounted for in each of the three indices above. Errors/garbles are considered to be important only when they are communicative, that is, they hinder comprehension to such an extent that the overall meaning of a sentence is not comprehensible (see Ney and Fillerup 1980). Perkins (1980) found that in evaluating compositions written by advanced ESL students only those syntactic maturity factors that could account for errors/garbles were accurate predictors of overall writing quality. On the basis of Perkin's study, the following syntactic maturity factors appear to be accurate indices for predicting overall writing quality in ESL/FL compositions: *Error-free T-Units, Words in error-free T-Units, Errors per T-Unit*, and a cumulative score of

all three of these indices. Ney (1966) has argued that *Length of error-free T-Units* is also an accurate predictor of overall writing quality. For further discussion of T-Unit analysis see Gaies (1980) and Larsen-Freeman (1978).

4. Kaplan's classification of discourse patterns according to ethnic background and nationality has been criticized as being highly ethnocentric and lacking analytic precision. Recently, however, a number of contrastive discourse studies have appeared which deserve the attention of ESL/FL writing instructors. Hind's (1980) excellent study of Japanese discourse structures reveals that Kaplan's classifications may provide a basis for more detailed research in this area.

5. The mixed findings of Ney's and Cooper's studies raise the controversial question as to whether syntactic complexity as measured by T-Unit length and clause length is an accurate predictor of composition quality. In reviewing a number of studies that reported mixed findings such as Ney's and Cooper's, Crowhurst (1982) has pointed out that syntactic complexity also depends upon the mode of discourse. In her study of sixth, 10th and 12th graders she found that at grades 10 and 12, "argumentative writing of high syntactic complexity received significantly higher quality scores than argumentative writing of low syntactic complexity, but that narratives of high syntactic complexity did not receive higher quality scores than narratives of low complexity" (p. 13). Since narrative writing is usually stressed more than other modes of writing in ESL/FL composition courses, Crowhurst's findings seem to have particular significance.

6. Kinneavy (1979) has suggested that these kinds of exercises, which usually lead to discussions on a wide variety of topics related to the composing process, may account for the relative success that sentence combining has had in college level writing classes, particularly in Daiker, Morenburg and Kerek's sentence combining program. Similarly, in the ESL/FL classroom, sentence combining can be used as a medium for teaching rhetoric and exploring other aspects of the composing process.

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APPENDIX

When writing sentence combining exercises, the following steps may be helpful:

1. Topics, places and people should be 'culturally relevent'.
2. Write out the exercises as if it were a standard piece of writing (e.g., paragraph structure, etc.).
3. Break down the sentences into kernels.
4. Review the grammatical structures included in the exercise.
5. Provide signalling where necessary, especially in introductory and semi-controlled exercises.
6. Make sure the vocabulary level allows for complete semantic understanding (vocabulary list may be included with each exercise).

Introductory Exercises (Controlled): Three or four grammatical structures can be covered in one unit (see, e.g., sequencing order on p. 85).

Adjectives

example: Henry lives in a house.
The house is newly-built. ➤➤➤ *Henry lives in newly-built Japanese house.*
The house is Japanese.

(Hint: do not use "and")

1) I like cake best.
The cake is chocolate. _____

2) My friend works in a company.
My friend is an American. _____
The company makes steel.

3) Students get jobs after graduating. _____
The jobs are high paying.

Adverbs

example: I sat down in the hot bath water.
I did it slowly. *I slowly and painfully sat down*
It was painful. ➤➤➤ *in the hot bath water.*

(Hint: do not use "and")

1) She wrote her name on the paper. _____
She did it quickly.

Sentence Combining

2) John can sing.
   His singing is good.   _____
   John can dance.   _____
   His dancing is bad.
             (but)

3) You should do these exercises.
   They should be done quickly.   _____
   But they should also be done correctly.   _____

Intermediate Exercises (Semi-Controlled):   Review all grammatical structures taught in one unit.

"The Invader" game, recently popular in Japan, is really a lot older than you might think . . .

THE INVADER

1) There was a room.   (Hint: Try "as he")
   It was dark.
   It was quiet.
   It was empty of people.
   He looked in.

2) He decided something.
   Now was his best chance to sneak in.

3) He jumped out.   (Hint: Try using the "and" in different ways)
   He did it from behind the curtain.
   It was done bravely.
   He rushed towards the table.
   It was done silently.
   He was hoping the heavy darkness would hide him.

4) He suddenly stopped.   (Hint: Try using "and" one time
   He was under the chair.   and "-ing -and" one time)
   He looked around nervously.
   He decided it was safe to continue.

5) He climbed.
   It was to the top of the table.
   He bit hard.
   It was into a cake.

to sneak in — 忍び込む

6) He took two nervous bites.   (Hint: Try using "but after"
   He heard a low voice.   one time)

7) He took one more mouthful.
   He quickly ran back somewhere.
   It was his hiding place.
   He chewed quietly as he went.

8) He smiled.   (Hint: as, how hard)
   It was done at the same time that he thought to himself.
   It was about the life of a cockroach.
   It is a hard life.

to chew — かみくだす

Advanced Exercises (Open): There should be no signalling in these exercises.

Read and then rewrite this story into a better form. You may change the sentences any way you wish, but try to keep the meaning the same. When you're done you'll know the terrors of . . .

THE 'DEPILATOR'

1) I stood.
2) I didn't move.
3) The door was behind me.
4) It was closed.
5) The walls were on both sides.
6) They were solid and they were silent.
7) He was in front of me.
8) He was looking into my face.
9) His eyes were empty.
10) His eyes grew a smile.
11) The smile came as he realized something.
12) What he realized was that he would soon have all the money I had.
13) I had it in my wallet.
14) I looked at his hands.
15) It was downwards.
16) I saw him take something out.
17) It was a silvery object.

18) It was also sharp.
19) Then he said something.
20) It was "Come over here."
21) His voice was soft and low.
22) I felt three things.
23) One was a feeling of wetness.
24) It was collecting on my forehead.
25) Another was a collapsing feeling.
26) It was my stomach.
27) It felt like a balloon losing air.
28) Another was a shiver of fear.
29) It was in my legs.
30) I knew I couldn't escape.
31) It was impossible by now.
32) I stumbled over to his side.
33) I fell into the chair.
34) I knew that he would soon cut me.
35) But I said something despite my knowledge.
36) I raised my courage.
37) I raised it until it was enough to say something.
38) I said "A little off the sides around my ears."
39) I also said "And shorten the top."
40) Then it began.
41) It was torture.

'depilator' – read the story and figure it out	solid – 固い collapsing –くじける
shiver – 寒け	to stumble – よろめき歩く torture – 資め苦

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